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*THE SOULS OF THE SLAIN.*<sup>1</sup>

BY THOMAS HARDY.

[NOTE.—The spot indicated in the following poem is the Bill of Portland, which stands, roughly, on a line drawn from South Africa to the middle of the United Kingdom; in other words, the flight of a bird along a 'great circle' of the earth, cutting through South Africa and the British Isles, might land him at Portland Bill. The 'Race' is the turbulent sea-area off the Bill, where contrary tides meet. 'Spawls' are the chips of freestone left by the quarriers.]

I.

THE thick lid of night closed upon me  
Alone at the Bill  
Of the Isle by the Race—  
Many-caverned, bald, wrinkled of face—  
And with darkness and silence the spirit came on me  
To brood and be still.

II.

No wind fanned the flats of the ocean,  
Or promontory sides,  
Or the spawls by the strand,  
Or the bent-bearded slope of the land,  
Whose base took its rest amid everlong motion  
Of criss-crossing tides.

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## III.

Soon, from out of the Southward seemed nearing  
A whirr, as of wings  
Waved by mighty-vanned flies,  
Or by night birds of measureless size,  
And in softness and smoothness well-nigh beyond hearing  
Of corporal things.

## IV.

And they bore to the bluff, and alighted—  
A dim-discerned train  
Of sprites without mould,  
Frameless souls none might touch or might hold—  
On the ledge by the turreted lantern, far-sighted  
By men of the main.

## V.

And I heard them say 'Home!' and I knew them  
For souls of the felled  
On the earth's nether bord  
Under Capricorn, whither they'd warred,  
And I neared in my awe, and gave heedfulness to them  
With breathings inheld.

## VI.

Then, it seemed, there approached from the northward  
A senior soul-flame  
Of the like filmy hue:  
And he met them, and spake: 'Is it you,  
O my men?' Said they, 'Aye! We bear homeward and  
hearthward  
To list to our fame!'

## VII.

'I've flown there before you,' he said then:  
'Your households are well;  
But—your kin linger less  
On your glory and war-mightiness  
Than on other things.' 'Other?' cried these from the dead then,  
'Of what do they tell?'

## VIII.

'Some mothers muse sadly, and murmur  
 Your doings as boys—  
 Recall the quaint ways  
 Of your babyhood's innocent days.  
 Some pray that, ere dying, your faith had grown firmer,  
 And higher your joys.

## IX.

'A father broods: "Would I had set him  
 To some humble trade,  
 And so slacked his high fire,  
 And his passionate martial desire,  
 And had told him no stories to woo him and whet him  
 To this dire crusade!"'

## X.

'And, General, how hold out our sweethearts,  
 Sworn loyal as doves?'  
 'Many mourn . . . Many think  
 It is not unattractive to prink  
 Them in sables for heroes . . . Some fickle and fleet hearts  
 Have found them new loves.'

## XI.

'And our wives?' quoth another resignedly,  
 'Dwell they on our deeds?'  
 'Deeds of home; that live yet  
 Fresh as new—deeds of fondness or fret;  
 Ancient words that were kindly expressed or unkindly,  
 These, these have their heeds.'

## XII.

'Alas! then, it seems that our glory  
 Weighs less in their thought  
 Than our small homely acts,  
 And the long-ago commonplace facts  
 Of our lives—held by us as scarce part of our story  
 And rated as nought!'

## XIII.

Then bitterly some: 'Was it wise now  
To raise the tomb-door  
For such knowledge? Away!' . . .  
But the rest: 'Fame we prized till to-day;  
Yet that hearts keep us green for old kindness we prize now  
A thousand times more!'

## XIV.

Thus speaking, the trooped apparitions  
Began to disband  
And resolve them in two:  
Those whose record was lovely and true  
Bore to northward for home: those of bitter traditions  
Again left the land,

## XV.

And, towering to seaward in legions,  
They paused at a spot  
Overbending the Race—  
That engulfing, ghast, sinister place—  
Whither headlong they plunged to the fathomless regions  
Of myriads forgot.

## XVI.

And the spirits of those who were homing  
Passed on, rushingly,  
Like the Pentecost Wind;  
And the whirr of their wayfaring thinned,  
And surceased on the sky, and but left in the gloaming  
Sea-mutterings and me.



## *SOUTH AFRICAN REMINISCENCES.*

BY SIR JOHN ROBINSON, K.C.M.G.

LATE PREMIER OF NATAL.

### IV.—THE SETTLERS.

IF the old Dutch voertrekkers won the grateful recognition of posterity for their bravery and heroism in facing the perils of the wilderness, and in doing battle with the pitiless forces of barbarism, the first English settlers of Natal deserved, I think, hardly less credit for the pluck and endurance with which they bore the many trials and disappointments of their new life in a new land. Though they did not come into collision with any of the savage tribes around them, nor win their title to the soil occupied by any blood-bought deed of cession, they nevertheless purchased their right to its possession by the sweat of their brows and the strength of their arms—by patient though often baffled industry, by unflinching struggles against hardship, failure, and adversity, and by the gradual reclamation and development of a desert land.

The Boers of to-day, sixty years later, loudly boast that Natal is theirs, by virtue of the bit of paper to which Dingaan set his mark—meaning to falsify it, as he did on the morrow—and of the subsequent victory obtained by Pretorius over the tyrant when the same primitive document was recovered. The British Government and settlers base their claim to possession upon the prior occupancy of the seaport by Englishmen, and upon the final reconquest of the colony by British arms, and by Boer surrender, but yet more effectively upon unbroken and unchallenged occupancy of the soil for fifty years. In the making of Natal, as it exists to-day, a place of enterprise, industry, and energy, the Boer settler has had but small share. His flocks and his herds have multiplied by natural increase, under the peaceful rule of Great Britain, and with the price of their produce he has been able to add to his acres and enlarge his untenanted domains. His homestead and its surroundings have improved somewhat on the primitive type, though not always. In some instances the force of example has led him to erect fences and plant trees. His ox

wagons, in charge of native drivers, have added materially to his income as carriers of merchandise. But in all that concerns real progress and development he has taken little, if any, part. His race is hardly represented in the larger towns. Had he been left alone in possession of the land, it would have shown none of those evidences of activity and advancement which now place it in line with the rest of the civilised world. The 'Republic of Natalia' might have been an Arcadia—of sluggishness and stagnation—according to Boer ideas and aspirations. It would certainly not be the busy, prosperous, progressive colony of Natal, the defence and retention of which have been deemed worth the most strenuous efforts of a vast Empire.

When the British Government formally took possession of Natal, and when British immigrants began in 1849 to arrive in the country, the desire of the Dutch voertrekkers was to get as far as possible from the reach of the one and the sight of the other. They were glad to dispose of their 'farms,' or land-grants, on almost any terms. The result was that the newcomers were able to acquire buildings of much larger area than those they had expected to occupy. I know cases in which tracts of 6,000 acres were sold for a wagon and 'span' of twelve or fourteen oxen, wherewith the owner enabled himself to 'trek' with his family into the far interior. A further result was less conducive to the public weal. Speculators in many cases purchased these Boer farms at an almost nominal cost, and kept them locked up until such time as they might succeed in obtaining relatively extravagant prices for them. In some cases they were later on thrown into the hands of a great land company, which, in its turn, relet them to native tenants, thus consigning them anew to the occupancy of barbarism. A large portion of the best lands in Natal has thus been deprived of the civilising influences of European settlement.

But it is not of absentee proprietorships or Boer drones that I now write. It is of the men, not many thousands in number, who have made Natal what it is. My readers know what a motley throng they were, and how devoid of capital or local knowledge. Yet they spread themselves over the country and occupied it. It by no means followed that the most ignorant—of farming or commercial conditions—were the least successful. Townsmen sometimes made the best agriculturists. Men who had never stood behind a counter in the old country occasionally

throve as storekeepers or tradesmen in the new. The first greengrocer in Durban was a tinsmith; one of the earliest market-gardeners had been an auctioneer; a leading lawyer in later years began his colonial life by carrying a hod. Most of our sugar planters had been men in business. Schools were established by persons who 'at home' had never taught a lesson. The category of topsy-turvydom might be continued indefinitely. The point of interest is that in a new country the true qualification of success is the stout heart nerving the ready hand. Experience is undoubtedly a good thing, but under changed conditions and the stress of necessity it may be relearnt without waste of effort or failure of effect.

The purpose which possessed the minds of most of the early immigrants was to plant cotton. There were doubts as to the sufficiency of the American supply of that staple, and there was a desire that it should be grown by free Africans instead of by slave labour. Yet cotton planting has never prospered in Natal. Some forty bales were grown by German settlers in 1848, and some years later several hundreds of acres were planted by a company, to say nothing of smaller ventures by private individuals. A small fly, however, and other pests attacked the crops; prices fell, and the industry made no headway. Other pursuits proved more attractive. Of these sugar-planting is the one that has held its own most continuously. I well remember the sensation that was caused by the first production of sugar in 1852. The canes, after nearly two years in growth, had been crushed by most primitive appliances, the juice being boiled in large Kafir pots. It was drained and dried in the same crude way, but the result was unquestionably sugar—though sugar in its stickiest and most treacly form. Those specimens were hailed by the whole community with pride and delight as being—what they indeed proved to be—the heralds of a new 'industry' to a people ever in those days on the watch for new products and openings. The experiment was followed by more ambitious ventures. Money was scraped together for the importation of improved plant. A company largely supported by Cape merchants was established, and though it did little else, it availed to encourage confidence in the enterprise, and to lead others to engage in it. Though after the lapse of forty years the industry has not developed to the proportions anticipated, it still holds its own as a mainstay of colonial prosperity, and central mills, representing a vast outlay of capital, and equipped with every

modern appliance of manufacture, are fed by evergrowing areas of plantation. The wild and tangled bush growth of the past has been replaced by monotonous breadths of rustling cane-field. The Picturesque has made way for the Profitable, and the beautiful coastlands, shorn and trim, have ceased to be natural and romantic.

The spread of sugar-planting led to a social change of far greater import than was at first realised. Cane is a product of slow growth and costly preparation. The industry requires both large capital and a permanent labour supply for its successful prosecution. The African native, good worker in the field though he be, after a few months' toil tires of the daily round, and insists upon returning to the free and idle life of his kraal. To meet this difficulty steps were taken, after much negotiation, to import from India indentured labourers, bound to serve a five years' term with an employer and to live at least ten years within the colony. I well remember one evening early in 1860 watching, from a height overlooking the sea, the ship *Truro* sail up to the anchorage. Her white canvas towered over the blue sea line, and we all regarded her as the harbinger of a new dispensation. And so she proved to be, though in a sense far wider than we expected. For the system has continued, despite difficulties and steadily growing opposition on the part of the European working classes. At that time all the trade of the colony, and especially that of the smaller storekeepers and 'Kafir dealers,' was in the hands of white men, and there were none but English mechanics and operatives. Now, the 'Asiatic' population equals in number the European. Country and Kafir stores are almost wholly run by Indian traders. The vending of fruit and vegetables, and to a great extent their growth, are the business of the frugal and irrepressible 'coolie,' who, after his term of service is over, settles on the soil, squats in a small kennel-like shanty, and lives at a cost which to an Englishman would spell starvation. Thus it has come to pass that the poorer classes of settlers have been elbowed out of the minor walks of trade and agriculture—shopkeeping, market-gardening, hawking, rough labour of all kinds—and the prospects of Natal as a home for white men are being gradually narrowed and restricted. Fortunately, the skilled artisan, the cultivator and stock-breeder on a larger scale, the clerk and the shopman, with other superior classes of employé, still occupy the field, and seem likely to do so, and it is by them that the steadfast opposition to an indiscriminate 'Asiatic invasion' is likely to be sustained. As the Indian can

now acquire the franchise only under very restricted conditions, the fetters imposed by law upon Indian immigration are not likely to be lightly or suddenly relaxed. Experience shows, however, that in a subtropical climate the indentured Indian labour is indispensable to successful enterprise in the field. Whether the colonist likes it or not, the free and voluntary Indian immigrant or trader finds his way into the country and silently works on there. As a purveyor of household supplies, as a domestic servant, or as a farm hand, he has made himself a necessity of life, and, as far as one can see, the Asiatic has come to stay in South-East Africa—at any rate under conditions.

Sugar was the contemporary of other and smaller industries, which at one time engrossed more attention than they have done since. Arrowroot-growing for some years in the later fifties was a favourite pursuit. The tuber with its upgrowth of broad rustling leaves is scraped or grated to powder, which, having been cleaned from the fibrous pulp, was exposed in granulated particles, on calico trays, to the sun. Absolute whiteness and purity from speck or impurity of any kind are essentials of quality. The process of production is very simple and inexpensive. Women and children can easily assist in it. 'Natal arrowroot' soon acquired an honourable position in the market, and the industry grew more and more in favour, but its success and popularity brought about its collapse. The market was soon overstocked; prices fell below a paying limit, and arrowroot was abandoned. The same fate befell the production of cayenne pepper. This condiment is the product of a small shrublike plant, of which there are many varieties with glistening saclike pods, ranging in size from the tiny yellow or scarlet chilli, of fiery pungency, to the bulkier and fleshier green or crimson capsicum, which in its raw and unripe state is a wholesome and appetising adjunct to the table. These pods, crushed and ground, yield the familiar 'cayenne' of commerce. It is still produced in Natal, but the prices obtainable are hardly remunerative.

Tillers of the soil in old countries, where the capabilities of the earth have been tested and proved by centuries of experiment and industry, know little of the interest which attaches to the agriculturist's work in virgin fields, whose resources are unknown and undeveloped. Tilt in these regions has the zest of novelty and surprise. All is uncertainty and speculation. The seed sown is the matrix of indefinite possibilities. The sprouting plant is the

subject of almost parental hopes and fears. Promise is often belied by fulfilment. The unexpected continually happens. Plants do not always fructify. Trees sometimes fail to bear. Sub-tropical countries like Natal, which belong not wholly to either the temperate or the torrid zone, and possess different grades of climate within a relatively narrow area, are natural hot-beds of experiment. The expectations of their pioneers are apt to be strangely falsified. Cotton failed, but sugar succeeded. Coffee, after a prosperous start, fell back and tea took its place. Wheat, from which two crops yearly were predicted, has never made headway. For many years peaches were the staple fruit crop of the uplands. Summer after summer wagons loaded loosely with them would arrive in Durban and be cleared of their contents by eager purchasers at 2s. or 2s. 6d. a hundred. Now they are less abundant, but the more wholesome and familiar apple abounds. It was thought in the early days that hardy English fruits would never succeed, but now strawberries, pears, and plums are common, though cherries, gooseberries, and currants are seldom seen. On the coast most tropical fruits have at all times flourished. Pine-apples, bananas, mangoes, papaws, guavas, loquats, granadillas (daintiest of Pomona's gifts), in their season, are often drugs, and for miles the hillsides near the railway are covered with fruit plantations. The spread of railways and the outgrowth of steamship lines, with their 'cold' chambers, have opened out markets where none existed in the old days. The old settlers had to reckon with the absence of markets as one of the chief hindrances to industry. They could grow, but they could not sell. The wants of the few householders in the two towns were soon supplied by producers in the immediate vicinity. There were no means of export, and growers at a distance, after bringing their produce to the port along wretched unmade roads, would more often than not find no purchasers.

In addition to the want of labour and the want of markets, there were, and are still, other besetting drawbacks in the path of the South African farmer and planter. For many years the sugar planter's triad of afflictions was known as the three F's—frost, fire, and flood. Strange as it may seem, the first was for a long time a real and recurrent source of dread. Until experience taught otherwise it was assumed that sugar-cane could only be successfully grown in the valleys, along the river-banks. It often happened in those days, before the lowlands had been drained and

cultivated, that once or twice during the months of winter hard frosts would visit vegetation in those localities and cruelly nip the leaves of the cane plants, strong and stalwart though they seemed to be. Many a time has the planter risen at dawn to see his rustling fields blighted by the keen touch of the crisp sharp air. In such cases nothing could be done but at once to cut down the frosted cane and crush it with the least possible delay. In course of time it was found that cane flourished just as well on the slopes and hill crests as on the lower levels, and frost has ceased to be a terror.

Fire still continues to be one of winter's perils. After months of drought plantations become so much tinder, and should by chance any field take fire, and a 'hot wind' be blowing, the devastation wrought is widespread if not ruinous. One 'Black Monday' nearly thirty years ago will long be memorable for the destruction wreaked through two counties by the ruthless fire-fiend. 'Fire-breaks' of trees or bare spaces, combined with vigilance in suppression, have greatly lessened the risks of conflagration, but the dangers of grass fires will long be a menace to the tree-planter and pastoralist in the upper districts. Natal has been described as a 'vast meadow.' Its hills are clothed from foot to brow with crisp and waving grass. The latter often overtops a man's head. From the earliest recorded times it has been the fashion, and a wasteful barbarous fashion it seems, to burn these luxuriant pastures.

Old navigators, passing along the sea-coast during the winter months, wrote of Natal as a 'land of smoke.' To-day the exquisite atmosphere of that season is blurred by the smoke that hangs or broods, like a brown veil, over the prospect. Efforts are made by the farmers, and encouraged by special laws, to regulate the practice, by confining it to certain seasons, and heavy penalties are imposed upon the wilful firing of grass. But it is difficult to prevent either accidental or wanton transgression. Should a fire break out when a high wind is blowing, it is vain to try and stem its progress. On it sweeps over hill and dale, licking up any inflammable thing that may be within its track, leaping over roads, attacking tree plantations, destroying buildings, should they interpose; after dark lighting up the heavens with the lurid glow of its encircling flames, and girdling the mountain sides with the contortions of its blazing outlines. It is the aim of most good farmers in these days not to



burn their grass until the spring rains have fallen, and a new growth is assured; and thus it came to pass the other day that General Joubert's column of raiders, by firing the grass between themselves and our own forces, was able to advance behind the smoke, unseen and unmolested, into the heart of our ravaged uplands.

Perils by flood are by no means peculiar to Natal, and they are less formidable than they were in days when cultivation was confined to the riversides, and when bridges and railways and hard roads were not. Then it was not a rare experience for country residents to be cut off from communication with their neighbours for days or weeks. If rains continued, streams would remain impassable, and many a hairbreadth escape would be recorded in attempts made to ford them. Flood rains in South Africa are torrents that appear only anxious to make up by their violence for past times of drought. I remember one which began at six in the morning and stopped at nine, when the sun shone forth and a lovely day of peace and brightness ensued. Yet during those three hours, more than six inches fell, and when an hour later I rode into the town, thirteen miles distant, the whole country seemed flood-swept. The road was seamed by gullies, culverts were torn up, and progress even on horseback was only possible over the grass, across country, and along dodging byways.

On another occasion in 1868, having finished the week's parliamentary duties at the capital, I started as usual for my home at the seaport. There was but one means of conveyance, a so-called 'bus,' or covered wagonette, which happened that day to be driven by a local magnate who was fond at times of thus displaying his powers as a whip. It rained smartly when we set forth, and it rained more and more heavily as we advanced, until it seemed as if no headway were possible against the driving elements. On we went, however, floundering, jolting, swerving, pitching, abandoning the road for the veldt whenever it was possible to do so, sticking fast constantly, breaking harness, lifting wheels out of mudholes, and appealing to the horses with every epithet of malediction and persuasion. As we changed horses every twelve miles there were alternate spells of activity and depression, but through it all our amateur driver kept cheerful and imperturbable, his spirits rising indeed as the difficulties of the journey multiplied. At the Halfway House the womenfolk inside were asked whether they would stay or proceed, but they all preferred to go on, though evening



was advancing and the rain grew heavier as we neared the coast. So on we went, plunging and lurching amidst blinding rain and evading the shattered roads wherever we could, until darkness fell and progress became nothing but a meek trust in Providence. In some places sheets of water covered the roads on both sides, and nothing but an unerring instinct enabled our friend on the box to keep clear of the hidden banks and ditches on either side. It was a bold and splendid feat of coachmanship, and the obvious satisfaction with which his performance was regarded by Mr. C. himself, when towards midnight he drew up at the town office, was doubtless his best reward. A day later it would have been impossible, as when morning dawned nearly every bridge in the colony had been swept away, and the main roads were impassable by wheeled traffic for weeks.

In 1856 we had had even a worse flood than that, but as there were no bridges to be washed away and scarcely a road worth the name, its effects were not so manifest. Durban, however, was isolated by two raging streams, and districts that are now thickly built over and populated were under water. The effects of floods were not then, as they are now, minimised by drainage, and destruction of property had to be borne with grim fortitude as one of the unavoidable experiences of life. With another form of natural visitation civilisation cannot cope. It is still the haunting dread of the fruit-grower. Thunderstorms can hardly be anywhere more frequent or violent than they are during our summer months. In the upper districts they are often accompanied by falls of hail such as Europe rarely, if ever, witnesses. After a day or days of exceptional heat, a huge blank blue-black cloud, like a giant wing, will spring up from the west and spread over the sky. Deathlike stillness falls. The hot air stifles. A long band of greyer or coppery cloud will sweep up from the horizon. Birds dart about and twitter. All nature seems breathless and apprehensive. Mutterings of thunder are heard. Then a muffled distant roar seems to rush onward, and all at once a tornado bursts overhead, wind, rain, and then monstrous hail, all contending together in deafening uproar and stunning confusion. Though the lightning flashes, the fury of the storm seems for a few minutes, while it lasts, to arrest the flash and to stifle the peal, until in a few minutes the tempest is overpast, and the storm assumes its normal character. It often, perhaps mostly, happens that in half an hour the sky clears and the sun shines with surpassing brilliancy, but the

jagged fragments of ice have stripped the fruit trees, and battered down the crops, if they have not wrought destruction to small live stock and outbuildings. These hailstorms, as a rule, sweep along the heights. Their tracks are comparatively narrow and sharply defined, being seldom more than half a mile in breadth. Nothing can stand against their wild buffetings. If the traveller be caught by one, as I have been, on some exposed stretch of mountain road, the best thing to be done is to crouch under the shelter of the vehicle, if it be an open one, or to get under the lee of any bank or barrier that may be within reach.

Insect pests are a constant trouble to the Natal farmer. Cotton suffers from a tiny green aphid. Coffee is attacked by a grub, or 'borer,' which saps the shrub's vitality and brings about its decay. Beetles of all sizes often prove destructive in both field and garden. A beautiful blue moth pierces and blights peaches. White ants attack the roots of many plants, especially roses, and caterpillars are apt to destroy bloom and foliage. But the plague of plagues, so far as insect life is concerned, is the locust. In the very early fifties the pioneer immigrants were startled by occasional flights of this deadly visitant. At first a few odd outflies—like the Uhlans of the German army—would flutter about inquiringly, as though spying out the vegetation, but ere long their numbers would multiply until the sky would seem alive with the rustling multitudes, and at last be darkened by the winged hordes. On the flight would pass, thickening and hovering until it would settle on every green thing below, covering the earth with a brown and quivering mantle, drawing slowly onward and leaving in its wake a stripped and leafless desert. In those days there was little cultivated ground to be thus ravaged, and, strangely enough, after 1852 the locusts disappeared. Constantly heard of in the interior they ceased to trouble Natal, until in 1894 they travelled downward from the north, in such monstrous swarms that the colony was panic-stricken. Crops of all kinds were devoured. In vain did the sufferers strive to drive off the invaders by the din of clamorous sound. In vain were tins beaten, sheets of iron banged, and other noise-creating expedients resorted to. Whenever the locusts chose to come they came to stay—until their ruthless task was completed, and the young crops were devoured.

As ruin seemed to threaten the community, Government was appealed to for succour. Special plenary powers of action

were granted by the Legislature, and a costly organisation was set on foot. 'Locust officers' were appointed for the several districts; barriers of wire netting were erected; trenches were dug; rewards were offered, per sack, for dead locusts. The services of the natives were enlisted and heartily rendered in the common cause. Human ingenuity was strained by efforts to devise remedial measures. One inventive-minded colonist appealed to the war authorities in England for assistance in a campaign he proposed to prosecute in Natal against the stubborn foe, by means of mortars and projectiles which were to scatter destruction amongst the flying hosts. Unfortunately for his scheme, the local government declined to spend money on the experiment, and the project fell through. Other plans were tried, however, with varying measures of success. Microscopic investigation discovered a fungoid germ with which living locusts were infected, and, dying, spread disease amongst their tribes. More efficacious, however, has been the use of poison (a preparation of arsenic), a process which some planters have found to be quite effective in ridding their crops of the pest. Partly because the evil has thus been coped with and partly, perhaps, because familiarity has diminished its terrors, little is now heard of the plague, and though locusts still hover about, they no longer cause a scare.

Insect pests are not noxious to the vegetable world alone. Animal life knows them to its cost. I say nothing about the tsetse fly, as it has never been known in Natal, though it is rife enough in Zululand, where scientific research is locating its area and securing immunity from its effects. The cattle tick may be less deadly, but it is far more diffused. Ticks range in size from the pin-point-sized speck, which is so troublesome to mankind, to the large, gross, and distended parasite, as big as a bean, which preys upon the helpless quadruped, and more especially upon the horse, the ox, and the cow. Gathering in the tenderest parts of the body, these greedy bloodsuckers penetrate and hang on to the tormented skin until they drop off in bloated repletion. They are worse in some seasons than in others, but they sap the vitality of their victims, and even horses have been known in bad years to die from their effects. Nothing short of care in picking them off, of vigilant attention, and proper treatment, will avail to counteract the activities of South-East African ticks.

Of the maladies that afflict live-stock generally chapters might be written, as indeed volumes have been published. The first

visitors to Natal, long before Chaka had swept off its native population, speak of it as a land rich in cattle and in goats. Horses and sheep were unknown before the white man brought them, but it has always been a land of pastoral abundance. When I first knew the country cattle plagues were relatively few. Sleek and fat, such herds as there were did full credit to their pasture lands. About 1855, however, lung sickness crept into the country and ravaged it from end to end. Farmers and carriers alike were smitten, and stock-raising ceased to be remunerative. It was not long, however, before inoculation was found to be a safeguard and palliative, if not a preventive. The virus was applied to the tail, which dropped off, and for years the comic spectacle of tailless cattle was witnessed on the roads and in the fields. An ingenious colonist—he was a cook—proposed to fix artificial wisps to the stumps that remained, in order to drive the flies away! Lung sickness has remained in the country ever since, but laws have been passed to restrain its spread, and inoculation and isolation help to keep it in check, so that cattle thrive and multiply in spite of it.

Twenty years later another epidemic—red water—broke out and proved almost, if not quite, as fatal as lung sickness had been. But its devastations were survived. One immediate and compensating result of these outbreaks was to bring sheep-farming into vogue. Sheep at any rate were not liable to these plagues, and farmers turned their attention to the new pursuit with the eager energy that has ever nerved them under successive rebuffs and losses. Sheep in their turn developed diseases which had to be combated with not less patience and vigour. Scab has for nearly thirty years tried the resources of both farmers and legislators. Remedial laws have been passed, and a costly veterinary department created, but the steadfast opposition of the Dutch population has seriously interfered with its utility. Perhaps the only perceptible grievance which the Boer can advance against British rule is the readiness of the Colonial Legislature to pass measures which impose restrictions upon his personal freedom of action, albeit absolutely for his own protection and benefit.

All previous forms of murrain, severe though they may have been, were in 1897 eclipsed by that most terrible type of cattle plague—rinderpest. For years it had been slowly but surely marching southward. Stories of a frightfully destructive malady sweeping off all horned animals in vast districts had come down

from the far interior, but so long as the visitation was confined to the distant regions north of the Zambesi it excited only an academic interest. Gradually, however, the plague crept nearer. It entered Rhodesia and played havoc with cattle and game there. It threatened and at last invaded the Transvaal. Then the European communities of South Africa awoke to a sense of impending calamity. The Republican Government took alarm and joined in action. It may easily be imagined how difficult it was to establish cordons and enforce restrictions in the case of a Boer population, but the Dutch farmer's love of cattle overbore even his repugnance to regulation, and the rules laid down were more or less complied with. Traffic was arrested and the circulation of stock interdicted. In Zululand the natives submitted loyally and effectively to all the rules laid down. All the governments actively co-operated in efforts to keep back the common foe. Thousands of suspected cattle were killed, and the most stringent measures were taken to prevent the passage of infected stock. In Natal, wire fences were erected all along the western frontier, and all ingress of sheep and cattle forbidden, to the great disgust of farmers who owned land on both sides of the frontier.

These measures entailed upon the colony heavy outlay and individual sacrifice, but the magnitude of the danger silenced all murmuring. Every effort, however, was in vain. With cruel steadfastness the plague advanced. Though the introduction of every conceivable medium of infection was rigorously prevented, the pest evaded all barriers. The fowl of the air and the creeping things of the field, possibly the germ-laden wings of the wind, carried it past zones and fences and spread it everywhere. Within a few months the country was swept from end to end. The prized pedigree stock of the European breeder, the dairy stock of the farmer, the 'trek' oxen of the carrier, equally with the cherished herds of the native—to whom cattle mean wives, property, wealth—were all mown down by the destroyer, and for a time the whole land was corrupted with the reek of rotting carcasses.

The patience with which the natives, both in Natal and Zululand, bore their losses was the marvel of all. They had been told by their magistrates what to expect, they knew that their Government had made stupendous efforts to drive off the plague, they saw that their white neighbours suffered equally with themselves, and they submitted to calamity when it came

in a spirit of patient fortitude, which was creditable alike to their loyalty and self-restraint. Then came the struggle for prevention as well as cure. Joint commissions were appointed by the several Governments. Bacteriologists were consulted. Experts were employed. Professor Koch himself came from Berlin to investigate the conditions of disease upon the spot. Laboratories for the production of protective lymph were established, with the result that rinderpest is no longer regarded with horror and dismay. It has taken its place along with lung-sickness and red-water and other controllable ailments to which stock is liable. The fair hillsides of Natal once more are dotted over with cattle, and both farmers and natives watch with complacency the increase of their herds.

Plagues, locusts, drought, fire, storms, failing markets, and a capricious labour supply—such are or have been some of the difficulties and drawbacks against which the settlers of Natal have had to contend. They are not peculiar to South Africa. They, or their equivalents, fall to the lot of British colonists in other parts of the world. My only purpose in describing them is to illustrate the circumstances under which a British colony is built up; to indicate the process by which the British Empire has become so powerful a factor in the world's destiny. Severe though these trials have been, harassing though these troubles have been, they have not in any degree availed to daunt the efforts of the settlers, or to abate their confidence in the prospects of the new land. Despite these experiences life in South Africa has its compensations, and men suffering them are still content to bear the risks of them, while men knowing of them are not afraid to share the lot of their predecessors.

And now another item has to be added to the category of misfortune. The hand of war has had the country in its grip, and not for the first time. In that dark year, 1879, Natal passed through all the rigours of a campaign, but except for one incident—the ever-memorable episode of Rorke's Drift—it was spared the horrors of invasion. Though for three months it was more or less in a state of panic, and for six months was beset by uncertainty and alarm, its soil remained inviolate and its homesteads were unthreatened and unharmed. A savage and ruthless foe menaced the border throughout that period of suspense and peril, but—save for the few brief hours beyond the Buffalo—the colony was not invaded. Of the thrilling experiences of those days I may

speak hereafter, as well as of other occasions when the colony was scared by war's alarms, or threatened disturbances, but not actually chastised by war's fiery scourge. Very different is the case now. As I write the country has for three long months been desecrated by the presence of a foe. After nearly sixty years of peace, the quiet uplands of Natal, where the memories of past massacres had been buried with the bones of the old voertrekkers, have echoed with the ceaseless thunder of Boer cannonading, and the frequent rattle of Boer rifles, directed against the habitations of British settlers, and the sheltering forces of the Government under whose just and tolerant rule that peace has prevailed. All the many evidences of toil and enterprise that mark that region are the product of this period. The wire fences that enclose the farms—sure sign of order and progress—the clustering tree plantations diversifying and humanising the prospect—the comfortable homesteads and embowering orchards—the herds and flocks and spreading fields—are the tokens and fruits of British rule, and mainly of British industry. So, too, are the thriving townships—Estcourt, Ladysmith, Dundee, and Newcastle—all centres of trade, municipal activity, and social progress. So, too, are the coal mines, whose existence and development are so invaluable a resource to a great naval power and maritime empire. So, too, is the line of well-made, stable railway that has helped so materially in the expansion of gold-mining at Johannesburg. Yet all these signs and trophies of Anglo-Saxon colonisation have been, and are still, in the hands, or commanded by the guns, of Boer invaders from the Republics.

The graphic pens of home correspondents have told the story of the war itself—as far as the censor's pencil would allow—with a fulness and power that are all-sufficing. The actual daily experiences of the settlers, however, fell less fully within their province. It is still too early to attempt any historical narration of them. The chapter is not yet complete; the tale of loss and suffering is not yet closed. I refer to them here only to indicate what the feelings may be of the people who have thus been called upon to witness the sudden wreck of their lifework. In their case the event was altogether unexpected. They had failed to realise that war was inevitable. They never deemed it possible that the colony itself would be invaded. The idea of Boer commandoes swarming over the Drakenberg, and taking possession of the country, never seriously entered their minds. Though they



knew that their Dutch neighbours and fellow-colonists sympathised more or less with their friends and kinsmen in the Republics, active and general sedition on the part of men so destitute of provocation was scarcely contemplated. In the upland towns residents were so confident in their sense of security that they never thought of moving until officially warned or directed to do so; and this was in spite of the spectacle of trains crammed with wretched and helpless refugees passing daily and almost hourly from Johannesburg. In the country farmers were still less inclined to fly. They fancied that the Boer forces would remain near the border, and not until Newcastle and Dundee had been evacuated and Ladysmith, after successive battles, been invested and cut off, did the real peril of the situation force itself on the minds of the settlers south of the Tugela.

Then most of them—the British-born, I mean—hastily took flight. First went the womenfolk and the children, carrying with them such portables as they could dispose of, and then followed the men, who held on to their homesteads until the Boers were actually in sight. Loth indeed were the housewives to leave their domestic treasures to the mercy of Boer raiders. In some cases things were buried, or hidden in roofs, in cornpits or plantations. In others they were left just as they were, trusting that confidence would prevent spoliation. Cattle, horses, and sheep were often driven off to the deep valleys under the distant mountains, whither the raiders were afraid to follow them. In some instances the owners escaped out of one door as the invaders appeared at another. Six well-dressed and well-mannered Boers rode up one morning to a country store, where some of the refugee farmers were awaiting events, and asked for ‘drinks,’ which they paid for. Mistrusting such civility, the British visitors quietly went to the back, mounted their horses, and rode away. Looking round from the hill behind they saw the slopes in front swarming with Boers, and the homestead in the hands of a looting horde—the vanguard of Joubert’s great commando—which had marched round from Ladysmith, unseen and unsuspected, as I have said; its route concealed by the smoke from grassfires purposely lighted, although thousands of British troops were encamped a score of miles away.

On a small scale this daring inroad resembled Sherman’s great march through the Southern States. It succeeded as long as its advance was mainly through country occupied by



Boer sympathisers. Then, when near Fort Nottingham, Boer farms were left behind and only British settlers met with, the hearts of the raiders failed them. Colonial scouts were encountered, and reports of reinforcements were received. So the commando turned eastward, possibly with the view of interrupting communication with Maritzburg. The country traversed offered goodly prey. Some of the finest stockfarms in South Africa are—or were—to be found there. One, belonging to the Natal Stud Company, has for years carried off the best prizes at the Agricultural Shows of the colony for its exhibits of pedigree animals. All were swept away. Wire fences were cut or trampled down. The enterprise and toil of long years were wiped out, and the homeless sufferers—forced to find shelter where they might—were left to reflect once again upon the chances and changes that beset the Anglo-African pioneer. It is true that in some cases orders were given upon the Transvaal treasury for the value of stock or supplies thus seized, and that in certain instances there was a marked abstention from undue interference with property, more especially as regards farmers who had chosen to sit still in their homes, but the general experience was one of loss, humiliation, and indignity. Fortunately for the colony the garrisons of Mooi River and Estcourt were able to arrest and divert the march of the Boer commandoes, though not to cut them off in their retreat, but the injury they succeeded in inflicting upon the loyal colonists can never be adequately repaired. Nor will it ever be forgotten by this generation in Natal that the most reckless and wanton of the looters were the rebellious Dutch neighbours with whom for so many years the despoiled settlers had been living in amity and peace.

Crushing though these latest experiences of trouble and disaster have been, it must not be supposed that the British colonists of Natal will faint or falter in the continuance of their mission as pioneers. The spirit that has enabled them to contend with and to overcome the antagonisms of nature will sustain them in their endurance of the blows and shocks of war. They have won, as we have seen, for the Empire and for themselves the country they inhabit; they have won it from barbarism, and have bequeathed it to civilisation; they have dowered it, through the grace of a wise imperial policy, with free institutions; they have fought, and many of them have died, in its defence. It is a goodly heritage, and they mean to pass it on as a homeland to their children and their children's children, let us hope, for many generations.

*MISTAKE IN WAR.*

BY LIEUT.-COL. F. N. MAUDE, LATE R.E.

It cannot be said with any degree of accuracy that the spectacle Great Britain has presented during the last few weeks, as brought to a focus by the daily press, has been in any sense an edifying one. Face to face for the first time for many years with the very stern facts that war always reveals, we have exhibited a childish impatience for results, and a tendency to cry out under punishment, which not only seriously weaken our prestige as amongst other nations, but unfortunately go far to sap the confidence of responsible officers in the stability and staying power of the country on whose support they must ultimately rely. The fighting strength of a country is not shown by hysterical contributions of nightcaps and cholera belts to the troops in the field, but by the quiet confidence of the people in its chosen leaders, and the refusal to believe, except after due and responsible inquiry, in the sensational accounts of alleged blunders, which, it is asserted by irresponsible authority, might have been avoided had the commonest precautions been adopted.

Can the British public, even the least instructed section of it, really be so unsophisticated as to believe, on the strength of half a dozen wild assertions, opinions of camp followers and the like, that men like Sir Redvers Buller, Sir George White, Sir William Gatacre, and others, who have spent all their lives amongst soldiers, and whose personal gallantry has been proved above reproach, are such fools as to omit every possible precaution that human ingenuity can suggest, before accepting the supreme responsibility of staking their own reputations, their men's lives, and possibly the fate of the empire, on the execution of their designs? The idea is preposterous, but, stated in this form, it suggests the existence of hidden impalpable resistances, entirely foreign to the experience of the average critic. Let us turn to the experience of other armies, and see whether their average performances will supply any clue to the question.

Of all nations in Europe, the Germans at present enjoy the highest reputation for practical military sagacity. Nobody, to

my knowledge, has ever suggested that Moltke and his incomparable assistants were either deficient in common sense, or in the habit of wasting their opportunities and time in social observances even of the least opprobrious description. If, then, we find that in the first few weeks of their greatest and most successful efforts they too were dogged by misfortunes, and to a greater extent than we ourselves have been, the inference must be pretty obvious, that there are some things in war which escape all possibility of precise prediction.

My chief difficulty lies in the selection from the mass of material military history so abundantly supplies, but I think the following account of the incidents which occurred between noon and midnight of August 18, 1870, derived from the writings of Fritz Hoenig, perhaps the best known military historian of the day, gives a better insight into the working of a modern European army under the full stress of battle than any other with which I am acquainted. I do not select it because it was the worst piece of leading throughout the war—as a fact it was, though there were other bad cases, 'Woerth,' 'Spicheren,' and 'St. Privat,' a fight which took place the same day some five miles to the northward, and formed part of the same 'battle'—but because there is perhaps no piece of military history which has been subjected to more severe criticism from surviving witnesses, and has successfully stood the test. Such plain speaking was not at all to the taste of many of the older Prussian officers, and it should ever be remembered to the credit of the present Emperor that when it was suggested to him that in the interests of discipline this inconvenient witness ought to be suppressed, he absolutely declined to interfere; but he knew the truth both from his grandfather and from Moltke, and it is well known that the old King, as he then was, one of the few who had seen and remembered the crude brutal strength of war as it was from 1813 to 1815, was inexpressibly disgusted with the softness of the modern generation.

With this introduction, let me beg the reader's most earnest attention to the following authentic narrative. I have had to condense it by more than half, but the essential facts are all given.

It will be remembered that the first army, commanded by Steinmetz, consisted of the First, Seventh, and Eighth Corps, of which on August 18 the first was still on the eastern bank of the Moselle. By special army headquarters' order, the Eighth Corps

was withdrawn from Steinmetz's control and handed over to the second army, Prince Frederick Charles, the Second Corps being assigned to Steinmetz on its arrival, which was not expected till late in the afternoon. Steinmetz was by no means pleased, and his loss of mental balance had a most sinister influence on the course of the day's fighting.

His orders received from Moltke about 10.30 A.M. indicated his line of action for the day—viz. an attack on the enemy's left flank from the direction of the Bois de Vaux—*i.e.* from the southward, the attack to be combined with the movements of the second army, and, pending their development, artillery alone to be employed. At the time the infantry of the Seventh Corps were scattered about over a large space of ground, and the first duty of the corps commander should have been to get them in hand. Within two hours nineteen battalions might easily have been concentrated along the northern edge of the above-mentioned wood, but nothing of the kind was attempted. When, about noon, the firing began, the whole artillery available unlimbered south of Gravelotte, and a number of isolated battalions were launched straight at the French position, with no unity in their efforts.

Nevertheless, they captured some very important quarries along the edge of the plateau, and further north, in conjunction with Goeben's Corps, the Eighth, carried St. Hubert (a farm to the east of the defile, formed by the cuttings and embankments, by which the Metz-Verdun road descends into and crosses the ravine of the Mance), the enemy having been driven out of the buildings by artillery fire.

St. Hubert having been won, and the edge of the plateau also reached, Steinmetz came to the conclusion that the enemy was beaten, and nothing remained but to pursue. Now, exactly at the same moment Goeben and the artillery officers of the Seventh Corps, who had a good view of the enemy's position, and could see that only the outposts had been carried, the main line being still untouched, noticed movements on the other side which led them to believe a storm was brewing, and Goeben ordered a brigade across the ravine to support St. Hubert. At this moment Steinmetz had just issued his orders for the 'pursuit.'

'The First Cavalry Division crosses the defile of Gravelotte; the advance guard, supported by the fire of the batteries of the Seventh Corps, will attack, leaving St. Hubert on its left, in the

direction of the Moscow farm, and will not draw rein till it reaches the glacis of Metz: all other regiments to follow it.' Metz, I would here point out, is at least seven miles from St. Hubert, and the ground between absolutely impracticable for cavalry; further, as the direction indicated points to Thionville, not Metz, it is very evident the old general had not consulted his maps. Again, if the enemy were retiring, the cavalry must trot to overtake them, and this would bring them in six minutes or so alongside of Goeben's infantry, already occupying the defile, at a spot where the embankment is twenty feet high or more, in full fire of the enemy. But this was only the beginning.

Von Zastrow, commanding the Seventh Corps, at the same moment ordered the whole of his artillery to cross the defile and come into action beyond it. The commander of the artillery could hardly believe his ears as he received this order. Seeing clearly what was coming, but compelled to obey, he sent his gallopers down the line to transmit it, with a caution not to go too fast, and to tell the battery commanders to be as slow about limbering up as they conveniently could.

Unfortunately, three batteries, not having found room to come into action, were standing ready at the western exit of Gravelotte, and nothing could save these, even though the staff officer did his best not to find them; they trotted off, and being nearer to the road than the cavalry took the lead of them.

Now (to quote Hoenig) let us use our imagination:

First. The eastern exit of Gravelotte had been obstructed by wires, only partially removed by infantry.

Second. St. Hubert had just been carried, and hundreds of wounded, stragglers, &c., were dragging themselves back along the road.

Third. To meet them comes an infantry regiment (the Twenty-ninth) one squeezes by as best one can.

Fourth. But this infantry did not know cavalry and artillery were following.

Fifth. The latter, also, were ignorant that they would find infantry in front of them.

Sixth. None of the three expected the crowds of stragglers.

Seventh. All three were full of zeal for action. Presently all of them were chock-a-block.

What a picture, and what leading! There was only one road, and into it were thrown troops from five different commands,

without any mutual understanding, any order of march—left to themselves to get through as best they could, then some to pursue, some to reinforce, &c.

Now, add to this a wall of smoke in front, out of which the flames of burning St. Hubert shot up, the shells from a hundred and fifty guns in action screaming overhead, men crowding together crushing the wounded, the cries of the latter, the shouting the echoes of bursting shells in the woods, and lowering dense over all a dust cloud which made dark the burning sun above. Imagine all this, and try to realise the mental condition of the men struggling to fulfil their orders.

Needless to say, this mighty pillar of dust was not long in attracting the enemy's attention. What it was caused by they could not tell, but it was evidently something very unusual, and they prepared to meet it.

The dust on the road grew denser; men fairly groped in it, and they began to remember that, as they descended, the enemy's fire, both of infantry and guns, had almost ceased. Each felt something was brewing, and a queer feeling of anxiety as to what it might be arose.

In front were the 4th and 3rd Light, then the 3rd Horse and the 4th Heavy Batteries, who crushed past the 29th Foot as best they might. Seizing their opportunity, the 1st Cavalry Division pressed in close behind, and to it attached themselves the two divisional regiments, the 9th and 13th Hussars, who, not belonging to the Cavalry Division, tried to push past the former.

Thirty-two squadrons were thus jammed up on this narrow dyke, or between walls of rock. Fortunately for themselves the batteries of the 14th Division had been cut off by the stream, and remained limbered up, awaiting their turn; but this was, nevertheless, prejudicial to the whole, in so far as it was deprived of their fire just at the moment it was most wanted (from the Gravelotte side) to cover their debouch from the other side of the valley. The leading batteries got through and unlimbered, and were received with a storm of shell. The limber teams, maddened by the noise and pain of wounds, bolted back into the mass, crushing many. The situation was intolerable. Then suddenly from over the valley they caught the notes of the 'Retire,' and, except the first four batteries, they obeyed it—how, Hoenig does not say, but I doubt if they did it at a walk.

The officer commanding these first four batteries had ridden

on in front to reconnoitre a position, but in their eagerness the batteries had crowded on him too rapidly, and had given him no time to look around. Actually the position is so bad for artillery that, going over the ground two years ago with several decidedly capable British officers, we simply could not believe that four batteries had unlimbered there. With the books and maps in our hands, we tried to identify the spot, and came to the conclusion that either they never got there at all or the distribution of the troops as shown on the map was utterly incorrect. The books, Hoffbauer, and the Prussian Official, state that only the knee-high wall extending parallel to the road from St. Hubert offered any cover. Gnügge's battery, the 3rd, took advantage of it. The others extended the line to the east, front to the north—i.e. Moscow farm—and this brought their flank within three hundred yards of the French infantry, in numbers in the farmhouse of Point du Jour. We felt certain there must be some mistake, and that at this hour Point du Jour must have been in German hands; but it was not, and with the fire from this place on their flank and an overpowering enemy in their front these batteries held their ground and served their guns.

The 1st Light, which stood nearest on the flank, was soon shot to pieces; but, as long as a gun could be manned, its captain, Trautmann, lying mortally wounded on the ground, having dragged himself in torture until he could prop himself up against a shattered carriage, directed its fire till his life ebbed out and he sank—a hero, if ever there was one.

The same fate overtook the 2nd Battery, Captain Hasse's. Orders were sent to him to retire, but, seeing the importance of standing by his comrade on the left, he sent back word that he would rather die than give way. He actually maintained his position for two hours. Then fresh teams were brought up, and, as he had fired his last round, and those of Trautmann's guns also, he at length gave the orders to limber up; but all the fresh horses were killed, except two, and these eventually brought off a single gun heavily laden with wounded.

Gnügge held out all day. He, too, lost very heavily. It was *some minutes* before his first round was delivered. Then his guns shot so straight that with his comrade Hasse they beat down the enemy's infantry fire; range about 700 yards. A more extraordinary instance of the power of guns, as guns were then, it would be hard to discover. The 4th Heavy Battery never un-



limbered at all. Had its commander got it to the south of the road, its fire against Point du Jour would have been invaluable in relieving the pressure on the flank of the others; but he lost his head and retired his guns.

Meanwhile a second, and if anything worse, catastrophe was brewing. Trautmann's battery had ceased to exist, Hasse had succeeded in withdrawing his last remaining gun, and Gnügge alone remained in action. Some 15,000 infantry, densely crowded together, still lay to the south of the road and St. Hubert in such appalling confusion that all efforts to rally them proved hopeless; and as the bullets and an occasional shell plunged into them their pluck died out, and they began to dribble away into the ravine by hundreds.

All this took some time—about two hours—and all this time other events were taking place in rear, to which I must now return.

The 2nd Corps, 'Franzsecky,' was forming up near Rezonville, the 3rd Division already on the ground, the 4th in the act of arrival. This corps had been assigned to the first army by headquarters, which had ridden forward to the right rear of the 7th Corps, close to Gravelotte, and here the meeting between the King and Steinmetz took place.

What words passed between them will never be known, the two staffs remaining a couple of hundred yards away; but, to judge by the King's gestures, Steinmetz had a rather unpleasant five minutes. If he had been difficult to get on with before, he became ten times worse afterwards, and refused to do more than merely transmit the orders received, without adding the details of execution which it was his duty to supply.

The 3rd Division was now rapidly approaching, brigades in heavy massive columns, bands playing, colours flying. As they descended the gentle slope towards the enemy's position, just above the cleft of the ravine, the sinking sun—it was about 6 P.M.—caught their burnished helmet-spikes till the masses glowed like a sea of fire—an apparition not lost on the French.

Le Bœuf and Frossard met at this moment. Both agreed that something must be done, and that, to break and defeat the troops immediately before them, if only to save the honour of their arms and gain time for retreat.

Both had used the time which had elapsed since the 'pursuit fiasco' to good purpose. New reserves had been organised,



cartridges served out, &c., and the guns which had been driven off the field by the Prussian artillery were waiting under cover, loaded and limbered up, ready to gallop forward into their old position, from whence they knew the ranges.

Frossard's Corps was the first ready, and, unfortunately for the French, it moved off independently.

Suddenly the front of his line was wrapped in a smoke cloud, a storm of bullets swept through the air, and the French dashed forward with all their old gallantry and *élan* from Leipzig and Moscow.

The exhausted German fighting line immediately to their front gave way; the French followed, skirting Gnügge's battery at about 100 yards; the latter threw round the trails of his three flank guns and poured case into them as they passed. The Prussian artillery on the ridge south of Gravelotte woke up, and their shells visibly shook the order of the charge; but still to the spectators at Gravelotte it seemed that the French reached and entered the eastern boundary of the wood in the ravine.

Then, suddenly, out of the western edge of the same wood there burst out a perfect torrent of stragglers, the thousands, literally, who for hours had been collecting in it. In a wild access of panic they dashed up the steep slope, and on to the front of their batteries; in vain the gunners yelled at them, and threatened to fire on them (but did not), in vain mounted officers threw themselves upon them sword in hand; the mob was mad with terror, not to be denied, and swept through the guns, demoralising all they came in contact with.

As a fact, the French had never really reached the wood at all; the artillery fire, supplemented by that of the really brave men who had rallied at the edge of it, had stopped the rush, and a very slight pressure on their flank had induced their rearward movement.

This was the second panic of the day, but a third one was at this very moment preparing, and, curiously, as a result of Goeben's order which had brought the above-mentioned sorely needed support to the flank. Goeben, seeing the 2nd Corps approach, knew that he had no further need for a reserve, and had sent in his last closed troops towards St. Hubert some minutes before the French counter-stroke.

The direction in which they were sent is open to question on tactical grounds. But, right or wrong, Goeben could not con-

ceivably have anticipated what actually did occur, for it simply passes the wit of man to imagine such a concatenation of blunders. The 9th Hussars, either with or without orders, were following in the track of the Infantry Reserve along the great road. The deployment of the leading troops checked the movement of the following infantry, and the cavalry regiment as usual tried to force its way past. Soon the block became absolute, and, as if things were not already bad enough for the Germans, Fortune ordained yet another cause of perplexity. At this very moment the reserve men and horses of the Hussars, coming straight from Germany, arrived on the scene. They had found the last halting-place of their regiment, had been there rapidly told off into a fifth squadron, and had immediately moved off in its wake.

Their horses were only half broken to fire, the men even less trained, and in a few minutes both became exceedingly unsteady in the roar of the fire re-echoing from the woods and the crash of the bursting shells.

The colonel in front knew nothing of this reinforcement, and presently, finding all possibility of advance at an end, he decided to get out of it far enough to give the infantry room.

He sounded 'threes, about,' that fatal signal; then 'walk, march.' 'Threes, about,' was obeyed with unanimity, but the untrained horses being now at the head of the column quickened the pace. The colonel, having retired as far as he wanted to, then sounded 'front,' and was obeyed by the first three and part of the fourth squadron, but the fifth never heard the 'front' at all, or, if they did, mistook it for the gallop, for at that moment they broke clean away and dashed back in wildest confusion up the road. The led horses and teams in the streets of Gravelotte took fright, panic seized on most of the men, and the next moment a horde of men, horses, teams, &c., streamed out of the end of the village and made for the setting sun. Officers of every rank rode at them with their swords and used them, but were swept away also, and not 200 yards away the King and staff were spectators of the disaster. Fortunately for the Germans, the French were in no condition to take advantage of this disorder, even if they saw it. The Prussian gunners were still in action, and fairly swept everything away before them.

A lull now took place for a while, but the King's blood was up, as indeed was everybody's excepting Moltke's. The King now ordered Steinmetz to attack with everything he could lay

hands on. Moltke endeavoured to dissuade him, but in vain. Having said all he could, Moltke fell away a couple of hundred yards, and found some other business to attend to.

Steinmetz, as we have seen, had lost both his head and his temper. He passed on the order as he received it to Von Zastrow, 7th Corps, and to Franzsecky, the 2nd Corps. The former had never for a moment had his command in hand during the whole day, and now all he could do was to send gallopers to order all they could find to 'advance,' simply, no direction or method being assigned them. Franzsecky, who was a first-class man but perfectly strange to the ground, dared not risk a movement through the woods direct against the enemy in the fast growing darkness. He accordingly chose the good old road, the defile so often fatal on this unlucky day. The order was given; the troops took ground to their left, wheeled into columns of sections down the road, and with bands playing, King and staff waiting to receive the officers' salutes as they passed, the unfortunate corps moved forward to what should have been, and narrowly escaped being, its doom.

St. Hubert had remained in the hands of the Germans all this time, but Franzsecky and the officers with the leading regiments, fresh to the ground, appear to have been unaware of this. As the leading regiment approached the unlucky garrison of this their bridge-head, unable to distinguish their uniforms in the twilight, and receiving the bullets meant for their comrades, they front formed as best they could and opened a violent fire into the backs of their own men, many of whom broke back, overran the head of the column, and confusion worse confounded ensued. The bravest men held on to the post, which was never relinquished, and under their protection order was ultimately re-established, but not till after a long delay.

We must return for a moment to the events that were taking place south of the road, about the great quarries, just before the 2nd Corps began its advance. These quarries, properly utilised, were the key to the French position, lying as they did but some 400 yards from Point du Jour, and affording ready-made cover for a whole division to form under. They had been captured once by the Germans some hours before, but the French counter-stroke had forced them out of it, and the latter had held on to them with grim determination. Shortly before the 2nd Corps moved off, the isolated companies of the Germans, on the initia-

tive of the leaders on the spot, had again succeeded in rushing them, and again the French from Point du Jour made desperate and repeated efforts to reconquer them, with all the better chance of success, for the darkness had now deprived the Germans of the support of their artillery.

Zastrow meanwhile, as already stated, had been sending officers to order whatever they could find to advance, and fortunately they only found four out of ten battalions, and these were just now emerging from the wood in rear of the defenders of the quarries, when the French made an unusually vigorous rush for their front.

The fresh battalions, receiving a heavy fire and knowing nothing of the presence of their own men in front of them, rushed forward and poured a heavy fire into the backs of their comrades—and one must do honour to the courage these displayed. They were the survivors of the fittest, weeded out by a process of selection that had endured for hours, and no man left his post, but hung on and mowed down the French at their very muzzles. Then, as the fire from the rear still continued, officers and volunteers walked bravely back in the teeth of their own men's fire, and at length succeeded in stopping it.

It was now pitch dark; the 'cease fire' had been sounded all along the Prussian line, and accepted, curiously and very fortunately for the Germans, by the French (it is the same in both armies), for the former were about to put the finishing stroke to their day's work of blunders and expose themselves to what should have been absolute destruction. It is difficult to disentangle what actually took place within my space. Briefly, when the troops coming up the road fired into the backs of their comrades, and a part of the latter broke back, hopeless confusion ensued at the head of the columns. The troops in rear, mad to get forward, pressed hard on those in front, and actually—thanks to their close order and excellent discipline—managed to force their way through as formed bodies, and then attacked outwards in all directions, only to be beaten back again. Again there was a lull in the fight, and it seems to have been about this time that the 'cease fire' was sounded. Franzsecky, his two divisional commanders and their staffs, were at St. Hubert. They decided that something more must be done, and ordered the 4th Division forward. At the time it was so dark that the troops had literally to grope their way across. The leading battalions were brought

to a stand by the darkness and formed in close column, and by degrees the others formed on them, so that by about 10.30 P.M. twenty-four fresh battalions were massed beyond St. Hubert, on a space of 1,300 yards front and 900 yards depth—'how, nobody can say,' and about these had aggregated the *débris* of fifty-nine companies of the 8th Corps and twenty-two companies of the 7th, so that towards 11 P.M. forty-eight battalions stood like sheep in a pen on a space of about 1,650 yards front by 1,100 deep, and not 300 yards from the enemy's muzzles.

'Surely,' as Hoenig says, 'military history contains no parallel case. Why had one brought these masses together? To attack; but then, in the name of all things reasonable, why did they not attack? Why did not at least these twenty-four fresh Pomeranian battalions go straight for the enemy without a shot? One hears so much of "dash" and "resolution," of an "advance with the bayonet," of the advantages of a "night attack." Here lay all the conditions for success in such adventures ready to hand: the enemy not three hundred yards away, the troops massed, and the dreaded fire-swept zone behind. If, as the troops actually did, it was possible to remain in this dense mass from 11 P.M. to 6 next morning, and always under a certain amount of fire—for from time to time the musketry blazed up anew—then why could we not go forward with drums beating, and overrun the enemy with cold steel? Three minutes were all that were required, and we should have lost fewer in those three minutes than we actually did in those seven hours. Why? The answer is plain, and I will give it; simply because we did not understand what fighting means; the whole course of the day shows it. We did not understand either skirmishing tactics or the employment of lines and columns, and the climax of the day was the bankrupt declaration of our tactical experts. The spirit was there—that was proved by our seven hours' endurance in this position—but it is not enough merely that the spirit should be there; one must also understand how to use it.'

In the above I have given the true history of twelve hours' fighting under normal European conditions, for, as a fact, the progress in weapons counts for little. The whole series of events took place on an area not greatly exceeding three miles of depth and two of front, say six square miles; the numbers engaged on the German side were about 60,000—about the mean of our own strength in Natal and the Free State during the last three

months ; and the superior command was in the hands of five war-trained European veterans.

Can even the most rabid of our detractors suggest that we come badly out of the comparison ?

Space has prevented me from dealing with the scouting, about which so much has been heard, but I could show quite as many errors in this line with ease in the first week of the Prussian campaigning. But take the scouting as equally bad in both cases : How does the fate of Colonel Long's guns at Colenso compare with the disasters of Gnügge, Hasse's, and Trautmann's batteries ?—and they were under ordinary breechloading fire at 1,000 yards, where ours came under magazine fire at 400 with smokeless powder ; yet all fought their guns for about the same time.

Our guns have occasionally dropped shells into our own infantry, thanks principally to the prevalence of the khaki fad ; but the German infantry without any such excuse fired freely into the backs of their own men.

The final 'bankruptcy declaration,' as Hoenig calls it, when the whole of the 2nd Corps and some 15,000 other troops stood within charging distance of the French line and did not charge, is exactly paralleled by Magersfontein, and one can almost hear the unfortunate Highlanders using his own words. 'What had they brought us here for ? to charge ! Then, in God's name, why did we not charge ?' and the answer is the same in both cases—viz., because the men whose business it was in peace time to teach the troops war had forgotten that the winning of victories was a soldier's first duty, the avoidance of loss came only in second place, if at all.

It was not the fault of the general who ordered the night attack, for, whether night attacks are good or not in theory, this one had actually succeeded in practice ; all that was wanting was the impulse to go forward with the bayonet, and the common sense which ought to have taught every man that in the dark the bullet is, to quote Suvaroff, a fool ; and the want of that common sense has been irreparable. Never since has this Modder River force been able to shake off the impression this defeat entailed. A glance at the casualty lists is sufficient to prove that their nerve is broken ; and if in face of Cronje at Paardeberg Lord Roberts himself, about as brave a man as ever wore the Queen's uniform, hesitated to risk an assault which was urgently called for by the strategical

situation, it was because he reads men's hearts like a book and knew that it could not be done.

The ultimate truth is that, with the best will in the world, peace training can never even approximate to war conditions, and there must therefore always remain a transitional stage which all troops must undergo in passing from a peace to a war footing, and the fact that this transition has cost us a lower percentage of loss than has ever yet been recorded in military history should suffice to give confidence to the whole country in the general soundness of our methods in peace, in the high average of true soldierly ability displayed by our leaders, and last but not least in the splendid fighting qualities of the troops themselves. We may have had checks and reverses, here and there a few stragglers have managed perhaps to creep away to the rear, but we have had no 'Drums of the Fore and Aft' (a story founded on fact, by the way), and certainly nothing approaching the panics of Gravelotte or, we may add, of Woerth and Spicheren. Students of military history will know to what I refer.



THE CHAPTER'S DOOM.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

THE Baron Ducos came into prominent notice for the first time at the second siege of Saragossa. He was then plain Eugène Ducos, a young officer on the staff of Prince Berthier, with his best laurels to win. He had not yet, by many years, received his patent of that nobility the creation of which by Napoleon was the only one of the conqueror's institutions that the Emperor Alexander of Russia undertook to question. 'He was fortunate when he ascended the throne,' had said this sad-experienced man, 'to find himself without one. Why, then, hath he taken pains to compose himself a monster that may destroy him?' But in this he, the Eastern Emperor, spoke an Eastern thought. He could not conceive how a nobility might be designed to serve for flying-buttresses to the soaring tower that tops the fabric of a State. To him the foundations of the tower should be the measure of its strength.

Eugène Ducos came to be an almost monumental example of democratic evolution. An artist by nature and temperament, his early recollections were of a little shoe-mender's cabin ('La prison de St. Crépin,' the wags of the Palais de Justice called it) that stood at the south-west corner of the Pont Rouge, and was a very mosque for pilgrims down at heels. There the threadbare advocate putting off his *pantoufles de palais*, the mendicant friar hobbling in with burst sandal-straps, must hold themselves in pawn to the repairs they could not realise on unless with the money that is so ironically called 'ready.' But they came and went monotonous, shedding moaningly a little harvest of coppers; and Eugène took his mental change of it all, never proposing to himself to be a cobbler, like his father, yet patient so long as he felt the futility of any rebellion against his traditional lot. At the same time, he knew himself born to an age that was to exalt his own class to heights that had glittered unattainable to the age immediately precedent. He had only, at any time, to cross the Pont Marie

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1900, by Bernard Capes in the United States of America.



and run up the Rue des Nonandières, and there before his eyes was ever moving, from east to west, a ceaseless panorama of characters that, in the steady ecstasy of its progress, seemed to typify the approach of a long-belated tribe to its promised land.

It had been like an endless game of chess, this trenchant advance of red-caps, save for the fact that, in a one-sided contest, the white pieces—bishops (or abbés) and knights—seldom pushed an advantage into the scarlet quarters of Saint Antoine. For there was not so much as a red pawn that failed to foresee its own apotheosis in its attainment of the royal squares westwards (the most notable of which, no doubt, was the Place de Louis XV.); and this made of it, collectively and individually, an uncompellable adversary. Once only was a castle of the whites held to threaten the fortunes of the game; but it was soon attacked and captured, and the peril converted into a triumph.

The little Ducos, as a child of four, had even been witness of this audacious move. Borne in his mother's arms, he had crowed to the great bang of the guns and the crack of the iron shot thrashing the Bastille walls; and had cheeped shrilly when he was held aloft to see an *Invalide* jerking and twisting from a lamp-iron, while the people whipped the *Invalide's* legs to make him spin like a roasting-jack. By-and-by he had been given a little fistful of dirt to throw into the mouth of dirty old Foulon as he was swept off the board; and by-and-by he had been old enough to fling a stone, on his own account, at the tumbril that conveyed the poor 'plucked fowl' of an Austrian to her death.

He was a pawn of curious promise by then, with perhaps even a glimmering conception of the part that later he held himself destined to play in the game of red pieces. If he threw stones it was not because he would be cruel then or thereafter; but then and thereafter he would always hold himself justified, through his art, in heightening, by whatever means, the picturesqueness of a situation.

In fact, he was an artist—an artist of the new era, but none the less an artist by nature and from the first. The child of wrath and fire, the offspring of unprecedented labour, his business should be to depict the very movement of the times from which his soul drew its sustenance. This, with immoderate precocity, he had set himself to do the moment circumstance allowed him to throw away the awl for the pencil, the blacking for the hog's-hair brush. He became a painter; and, presently—in that the field

of war seemed to offer the wide scope to his genius—he became a soldier of the greater Revolution.

First and foremost, nevertheless, he was an artist. The fact decided the manner of his every action. He was for ever booking impressions—as other men bank their acquired gold—that he might secure himself a retirement by-and-by of callesthetic affluence. Then, in that maturity of his intellectual fortunes, should his work take compact shape and issue greatly.

Of his temperament, he became an artist; of his choice, a soldier; of his innate mental refinement, a scholar and—according to the Napoleonic creed—a gentleman. His promotion was always of steady progression, because no man more clearly than he could apply to prevailing conditions the fable of the Belly and its Members. He was in addition an excellent linguist; and it was plain that the soldier who could in those times converse with fluency in Italian, in German, in Spanish, and even less colloquially in English, who could sketch the plan of a fortress or make a drawing of a wide campaign, who was an active and intrepid staff-officer, would not be committed to an inglorious neglect.

This liberal education of Ducos was all crowded within his years from thirteen to twenty. He had a marvellous power of assimilating mental food without effort.

His first military service—as drummer-boy to that corps of heterogeneous students that called itself the *Compagnie des Arts*—was in accompanying the escort to a convoy carrying provisions to General Kellermann, who won, at Valmy, the very first Republican victory. Later, he was by a curious irony of fortune attached to the staff of a General Jacob, who, from being chief shoemaker to an infantry regiment, had stepped into seven-leagued boots of his own manufacture. But, in truth, those days were notable for an extended schism from the traditional faith in the exclusive qualities of blue blood.

Such tentative skirmishes with fortune must soon, however, with a man of Ducos's gifts, lead to a more definite action. His value asserting itself, he rose by rapid steps—the details of which it is unnecessary to enumerate—to the position of aide-de-camp to Marshal Berthier, in which capacity he was frequently brought into contact with, and received personal instructions from, the Emperor himself. His career, in this latter consequence, promised very early to be a varied and an adventurous one. He sparkled with such alert qualities as his employer knew well how to turn to

the best account. In no long time he was a tempered weapon in the hands of the first of soldiers; and he answered to the other, sentient as a sword, between the hilt of which and the wrist of its master-wielder had grown a sympathy that the closer it held together the more jealously it shrank from contact with outer influences of humanity.

Ducos had taken part in the campaigns of Holland and of the Rhine; in the battles of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena; and now, at no more than twenty-four years of age, he had been commissioned to proceed to the camp before Saragossa—with despatches to Marshal Lannes, who latterly was conducting operations there—and to watch and report upon the conduct and progress of the siege.

He arrived, early in the month of February, 1809, before the walls of the doomed city, to find that a general assault, organised but a week earlier, had precipitated the besiegers—as yet no conquerors—into the town, where a house-to-house warfare had succeeded the long thunder of bombardment. But even then the labouring life of Saragossa was sucking inwards upon its heart.

It was Ducos's boast that he never thought. To see and to record was his business. Impulse with him was truth, and thought a mere blind pulled down over the eyes. He would enjoy, vexed by no scruples; he would suffer, damned by no apprehensions. To worry oneself as to why a thing was, was to see the thing out of all plain proportion; and that was not to be an artist. It was this, his creed, or instinct, that brought about his quarrel with Captain Roguet.

The storming of Saragossa by Junot had been to its defenders a month-long terror of insidious approach, manœuvring under cover of an endless crashing gun-fire. Yard by yard, wriggling zigzag, the French had carried forward their screened communications—over ruined gardens, shattered olive woods, and fields ploughed by balls against the sowing of a royal harvest of death—until they could reach and enter through the walls by way of the gangrenous holes their wounding iron had wrought in them. Day by day they had seen the breaches torn by their batteries enlarge; had seen the old buildings that topped the ramparts—convents of Saints Augustine and Engracia, Moorish palace of Aljaferia, with

its arches dropping stone like stalactites—crack and topple and fall into ruin; had seen dimly through the gaps vistas of other grey towers standing up, charged and silent, to await their coming. But they came undaunted, when the holes were practicable; they entered, in a devil's hail of lead, and made good their footing; though they might not yet proclaim themselves conquerors. They had smoked the hive; but the bees were not stupefied. For still another month they must painfully close in—step by step, leaving bloody footprints—upon the central citadel, into which Palafox and his heroic patriots were withdrawn. Then it was theirs to find that if a circumscribed enemy is an enemy foredoomed, his area of defence is at least as deadlily concentrated as his opponent's is extended.

They entered, indeed, uninvited guests, and were given warm lodgings and a fiery welcome. They must bivouac nightly upon or within the monstrous ruins of their own contriving. By day they must push through a tortuous maze of brick and stone, every yard of which was menaced by collapsing buildings, by unseen marksmen, by peril of sortie vomited swiftly and suddenly from dusky passages. Did they covet a position, they must deprive themselves of its advantages by battering it to pieces before they dared occupy it; did they congratulate themselves upon a *coup de maître*, it was often only to find themselves bested in the reckoning. Yet they contracted doggedly about the core of defence; stealing from cover to cover; mining, countermining and countermined; laying their trains triumphant, or crushed like rabbits in a landslip. And all day and all night, for three inhuman weeks, the reek and uproar went up in the narrow streets like flame in a blast furnace.

Captain Ducos, placed by instruction under the orders of a General Latour who commanded the siege train, found himself circumstanced entirely to his taste. His military and artistic perceptions had never before, perhaps, enjoyed so commonly sympathetic an outlook. They met in one focus like the lenses of a lorgnette. He grew so daring in his desire to indulge the combination, that his comrade, Roguet of the Engineers, was constrained to remonstrate with him.

'It is not the part of a thoughtful soldier,' said this serious captain, 'to hold his life at a very cheap rate.'

'But, as for thoughts, mon ami,' said Ducos, 'I have never one that would do credit to a *chiffonnier*.'

He was pale, and dark, and tall—eager, and quick with nervous life. The other was red and stolid—red-haired, and even a little red-eyed.

'My life is the Emperor's,' said the aide-de-camp. 'He wields it like a sword. It is no concern of mine.'

'But he would not thank a weapon that snapped in his hand,' said Roguet.

He took a great bite at an onion as he spoke. The two were feeding at a drum-head off some shreds of hard meat garnished with this vigorous seasoning. They sat in the ground-floor room of a house, their exploded window of which commanded a view of a long wide street going straight up to a dark-walled convent with a high belfry tower. This building was, as evidenced by its blotched and wounded condition, within destructive gunshot range. No barricade, moreover, cut the broad white pavement that led up to its very doors. Yet a moral line of demarcation bisected the street, on either side of which line would appear, at a signal, a force of contending soldiery. The convent was, indeed, a position so long disputed, that the first plans for its capture were already become a tradition with the besieging party. Still it stood, and seemed likely to stand, intact—its stone gargoyles snarling defiance from their perches; and, lifted like a supercilious eyebrow over its cloister wall, rose a high gallows tree, from the beam of which something as limp as a wet dark shawl hung motionless.

This, indeed—one only of many gibbets erected about the town—was a visible expression of the temper of the besieged. On such they would string, giving no right of appeal, all of their own who so much as counselled conciliatory methods with the enemy. Desperate, exasperated to the most furious extreme by the wanton cruelty of the war waged against them, their ferocity knew no control, their hearts no mercy, their audacity no limit. They died like rats, biting at the gins that snapped upon them; they fought mutilated, so long as a muscle would serve their hate; they rotted by the hundred of famine and pestilence—in noisome cellars, in garrets rained upon by bombs, in the kennels which they contaminated—and gave no sign in passing but of deathless animosity.

And all day and all night the reek of the horror rose and hung

above the town, as if hell at last, burning through its roof, were in process of forming here a crater.

Suddenly, at a common impulse, the two men jumped from their seats and looked cautiously forth through the shattered casement. Up the tower-top of the convent—a structure rising in three hexagonal stories, that diminished like the parts of a telescope—a little active figure was going busily, its purpose obviously to replace a flag that had been shot from its staff on the summit. This summit rose in a steepish leaden cone from the crowning gallery, and gave perilous foothold; yet the tiny steeple-jack seemed to ascend it readily enough, and had even reached and swarmed two-thirds of his way up the staff itself, when a Polish sharpshooter ran out into the street and discharged his piece at him. The poor rogue fell like a bird from mid-air, and, rattling down the slope, was shot over the low parapet with such impetus that his body, sprawling X-shape, whirled clear of all the galleries and slapped down upon the pavement two hundred feet below.

Now the sportsman, intent upon his bag, delayed too long a moment and was shot in his turn; and at that another—a furious ‘Yanguesian’—ran out of an alley and stamped upon the wounded sportsman’s head. This was the signal for one of those general sorties—common to both sides of the line of moral demarcation—that might be provoked a dozen times in a week. In a moment every court was disgorging its contingent; every house its select hot spirits. Hurrying figures leaped from windows, or, pushing up cellar-flaps, rose swarmingly from the ground. There was a rush, a writhing shock, and the mass crackled into fire like a bush flaming through all its bitter thorns.

Roguet faced about.

‘Ducos! what the devil! thou art not going, my friend!’

‘I am going. It is easy to drive these rascals, and crush them against the walls of the convent itself. And I have never looked upon one that hath fallen two hundred feet into (*into, bien entendu, M. Roguet*) a stone pavement. My faith! the thing lies there, a pool, it seems, of black water!’

He was gone from the room.

‘*Sacre bleu!*’ muttered the Engineer captain. ‘The creature is a brave creature; but no soldier, for all that.’

Nevertheless, he exposed his own life to risk in the excitement of watching from his perilous covert the movements of his

comrade. He saw him dash into the fray, sword in hand, and verify his boast with all the verve and intrepidity that were his characteristics. He saw the enemy waver and give before the onslaught re-inspired by this brilliant young Paladin; he saw it retreating, flying, pursued as far as the very walls of the convent, and then——

A fresh body of the enemy had debouched from a side street and converted a victorious skirmish into a catastrophe. The last Roguet saw of his friend was the tall figure, surrounded and disarmed, being haled through the half-opened portal of the convent.

The door closed; the remnant of the attack retired in good order; the street by degrees resumed its former aspect of menacing vacancy.

This was only one of such incidents as were of daily occurrence throughout the city.

Roguet made his report to General Latour, who was exceedingly vexed.

‘Berthier will miss him; the Emperor will miss him,’ said he. ‘It is not by foolhardiness an officer serves his profession. To throw oneself away unnecessarily is to discount the better valour of discreet spirits. I hope, at least, he will realise that when the rope is round his neck.’

‘Pardon me, my General,’ said Roguet. ‘But this M. Ducos has squeezed himself out of tight places before now.’

‘Well, well. And for this *sacré damné* convent of the Holy Trinity: when wilt thou scatter it to the winds for me?’

‘In less than a week under Providence, sir,’ answered the modest and pious captain, who designed tossing a whole community of nuns in fragments to the sky. ‘We have tunnelled,’ he said, ‘into a conduit that will save us fifty mètres of labour.’

## II.

Captain Roguet, accompanied by a brace of sappers, traversed a narrow passage that ran parallel, behind gardens, with the street of the Holy Trinity, and, fifty yards on, turned into a courtyard, and so into a house, that neighboured pretty closely that invisible barrier dividing the contending parties. The building he entered was one of quite jealous defences, and was strongly manned and guarded. Its cellars, in fact, formed the entrance to



a subterranean gallery that had been driven at last, with infinite toil, to within reasonable reach of the actual foundations of the convent. Another forty-eight hours' work, and the horrible task would be accomplished.

Descending, with picks and lanterns, the three men went down a dropping slope into a lacerated gully, along which they crept steadily and swiftly, in an atmosphere of inhuman rotting silence, until their progress was checked by a sudden narrowing of the way. Here, indeed, was the beginning of that conduit to which Roguet had referred—a drain of monstrous pipes laid end to end, each pipe a huge hollowed-out tree, the whole of uncorrupt and nameless antiquity. Now a sapper, falling upon hands and knees, disappeared into the deadly burrow, drawing with him a clue of cord. Minutes elapsed before the jerking of the string gave signal of his emerging at the further end. Then his comrade fastened to the slack of the cord the bag of disjointed picks, and, doing the same by the lanterns, extinguished their light and gave the signal for all to be pulled through the drain. The load went screeching on its passage; sapper and captain, prostrating themselves in the stolid darkness, followed it, one after the other—a blind unnatural journey; and, half blind, like moles, they issued presently at the further extremity of the wooden gut, and stood up again, ashy and trembling in the rekindled candle-light.

Onwards, once more, through the gallery of their own laborious piercing; over the *débris* of much that was fantastic and terrible. Once they had cut through a row of antique skeletons, the skulls of which yet stuck in the clay overhead to the left, the shanks to the right—like almonds imbedded in a cake. Once a buried treasure—a jar of ancient coins—had been unearthed by their picks. The glittering pieces yet lay scattered and trodden under foot, where they had left them as tumbled from their age-long hiding-place. For these men wrought for glory, and not for means to the amelioration of an existence they held as cheap as the dirt they bored through. And presently they reached the limit of their hitherto labours, and set to work like demons upon the cloddy wall that faced them.

Half speechless, weary, and earth-stained, Captain Roguet dragged himself above ground in the cold twilight of a February evening, and made for his quarters to eat and rest. There was a

strange stir in the house of the shattered windows—uproarious merriment and the winey babble of voices. He entered, wondering. The figure of a tall Benedictine nun, secret and hooded, detached itself from a rollicking group and approached him.

‘Fais attention à ce que tu fais! Little Peter! Little Peter!’ shouted the malapert youngsters. ‘Qui trop embrasse mal étreint!’

Pierre Roguet seized the figure and forced back its hood. The laughing face of Ducos was revealed to him—Ducos, the week-long vanished, the mourned, and the forgotten.

‘Dieu vous bénisse, mon brave!’ cried the captain of Engineers in great emotion, and he kissed his recovered comrade ecstasically on either cheek.

He would have all the history of the escape; but here he was disappointed. Ducos was curiously reticent on the subject. Ducos put the matter laughingly by. Only he would acknowledge that he had been carried unhurt into the convent and had been imprisoned there; that he had been visited, and threatened with torture, by representatives of the Junta; that, at the last, he had exchanged dresses with the porteress of the great door, and had so been enabled by mere audacity to make his way into the street (that was but an hour ago) and rejoin his comrades.

‘And the porteress?’ said Roguet.

‘And the exchange of dresses at the door?’ cried tipsy De la Croix.

Ducos explained.

Not by any means at the door. She had come to him at night. She took his things, and he hers—to the very sandals, for precaution’s sake (a statement that elicited fresh hooting).

‘Ciel! What a load for a lady! But, after all, she was *portière*—of an age to bear.’

‘Yet, I do not understand,’ insisted Roguet.

‘That is a pity,’ said Ducos; ‘for I have no clue to offer you.’

He turned away—the other also. Roguet was very much exercised in his mind as to how his comrade could have disposed to her safety the lady who had thus daringly lent herself to his escape.

‘Perhaps,’ he thought, ‘my brain is fuddled for want of sleep.’

. . . . .

Roguet and his sappers had reached, within a few feet, the goal of their hideous labours. The light of their lanterns—concentrated in a little clayey cavern—fell brilliantly upon a sinister array of powder bags and fuses disposed symmetrically at the mouth of a low tunnel behind them. This (the tunnel) took in its termination an upward writhe, and funnelled out to the excavated chamber in which they worked; for the engineer, profiting by some information supplied him by Ducos, had deviated slightly from his original plan, in order to the striking of a certain vault apt to the placing of his *fourneaux*. There had been no uncommunicativeness in the least respect of matters military on the part of the restored aide-de-camp. True to his creed, he had made it his business, while a prisoner, to *see*; and his after report proved of signal consequence to his friend. That was excellent; still M. Roguet had not succeeded in sleeping off his perplexity. Rather, it had deepened. This Ducos—a very Antinous, without doubt—seemed sedulous to ensure the destruction of a place that harboured, presumably, a confederate most tender to his interests. Such monstrous seeming was incredible; but how, then, had he secured the safety of one whom he had used, it appeared, to the last extremes of gallantry? Roguet could guess in what manner the Junta would be likely to deal with a *religieuse* who was not only faithless to her vows, but a traitor to her country. The thought was always haunting him as he worked. He so desired, for his friend's sake, that his mind could be put at rest.

The men laboured half naked, swiftly and furiously, but with a trained avoidance of clatter. Their eyes glared, their muscular chests heaved, the sweat rained down from their foreheads. They must always be fighting against Time, these divers of the earth, as if, so far as they were concerned, they wished to end him. And, indeed, he dealt hardly with them during their business hours, and their thoughts may well have been murderous.

Suddenly a sapper's shovel grated upon stone. They had reached their goal, the foundation wall of the convent. Captain Roguet, pushing forward his subterranean gallery on an ever-changing gradient, had taken an upward swoop at the crucial point, and struck his quarry, literally, some fifteen feet below the surface of the churchyard flags.

Only a scarce ascertainable thickness of wall lay between the man and the fulfilment of his task. The workers cleared away

the interposing soil, revealing a smeared patch of stone. Then they fell back, standing at momentary ease with a sighing pleasure of relaxation ; and Roguet advanced to test by stroke of iron.

He swung a hammer, and brought it with a clean smack on the wall. Something—a little cry—as if the sentient building had suffered, answered to the blow. The officer staggered, and stood holding his left hand to his forehead. The sound had been ghastly—human—unmistakable in the buried silence of the chamber. In a moment he looked round amazed. The sappers, their faces white as dowlas, were retreated towards the tunnel mouth.

‘Ventre Dieu!’ muttered one of them, in a shaking voice. ‘We have encroached upon the kingdom of the dead. Come away, Captain, in the name of God!’

Roguet recovered himself and stamped with his foot. ‘In the name of poltroonery, thou heart of a chicken! Was ever dead laid so deep?’

He caught his breath suddenly, passed his hand again across his forehead, and whispering, as it were an echo to his own words, ‘was ever dead laid so deep?’ sprang to the wall and scratched at it insanely, like a dog.

‘Here!’ he cried in a frenzied manner. ‘Jules, François! In the name of God, who speaks to me things unutterable—who——’

A second time the quick sense of discipline checked and restored him to himself. ‘Pierce me this wall,’ he said authoritatively. ‘To the front, sappers!’

They came to the word ; but they were ashy pale. The points of their picks dubbed on the mortar like shivering teeth ; they were long dislodging the first stone. Then, in the glow of labour, they wrought harder and with more confidence.

No second cry issued to unman them. Roguet stood by, tight-lipped, self-repressive. It was strange that he had never once taken that human cry for a warning to desist. He seemed exalted, inspired, like one to whom the solution of a long-vexing problem was, under Providence, on the point of revealing itself.

One, two, three stones—a wall of only two-thirds of a mètre in thickness! He had been prepared for worse ; and he gave a little gasp as the innermost block was prised out and toppled with

a thud upon the rubbish. A jagged mouth of blackness opened at him. He seized a lantern and directed its light into the hole. Spars of sudden glitter within answered to the unsteady glow. They might have flashed from buttons or gold lace. He choked down a cry, plumped the lantern upon the ground, and, snatching a pick, wrought frantically with the others to enlarge the aperture.

Stone from stone the mouth gaped wider.

'My God!' exclaimed one of the men all in a moment, and fell back from the hole whimpering.

Roguet seized up the lantern, and, leaning forward, stared into a reeling well of night. 'Take it!' he said, turning about and thrusting the light into the hands of his half-paralysed neighbour.

'Oh, mon Dieu Jésus!' sobbed the man. 'It looked at me and sank down—down. That they should treat us like this when they catch us!'

'Be silent!' exclaimed Roguet, 'and hold it so that I may see.'

He scrambled through the broken chasm—hung over the further vacancy—tried hopelessly, his body obstructing the lantern shine, to read into a horror he had as yet but half interpreted. He must perforce turn about again and demand a candle from the store. It was handed to him—a light flaring into the secret place of wickedness. The figure he sought—fallen faint in the sudden mad prospect of release—lay huddled a yard beneath him upon the floor of a narrow cave built into the thickness of the wall. The horrible chamber may have measured two feet by three. It rose a short man's height. A pitcher of water and a single loaf of bread lay tumbled against the crushed-up legs of the immured.

Roguet, the man of doom (under Providence), gazed down in inspired pitifulness. Eyes not mindless, but strained and swooning, looked up into his. The close-cropped head was reeled back against the wall, the lips moved voiceless, the poor wretch had a dying face.

'Hear me!' said the Captain. 'Canst thou rise and come forth?'

A little weak moan was his answer.

'Hear me!' he said again. 'I desire your room, poor soul!' He caught a word then: 'Eugène—Eugenio!'

'God forgive him!' he muttered, and leaned down and seized the figure under its arms.

He was a lithe and powerful, if not a tall, man, yet he must strain every muscle to exhaustion before—first flinging the candle back into the vault—he could raise and drag the helpless creature's body towards him. And there he held it, his moustache brushing its cheek, his naked breast oddly conscious of the full swell and fall of that he clutched against it.

The candle, whizzing like a squib, fell flaming within touch of a powder bag. The technical solecism of the act was an immediate tonic to the demoralised nerves of the sappers. They rushed together and trampled out the peril; then hurried to their captain's assistance. In another moment they had haled forth the half-senseless body he supported, and stretched it upon the ground, where it lay motionless, its face dropped into shadow.

'Monsieur,' whispered François, the awestruck man, 'it is M. Ducos, is it not? And how have they dealt with him—mother of God! that he should be shrunk thus within his uniform!'

These two good fellows had not, indeed, heard of the prodigal's return.

But Roguet waved him imperatively to silence. He was not able to speak for a minute. His breath was gone, his back bent, but a light quite hideous flickered in his eyes. And presently he panted out:

'Enter you, there, and pierce through the further wall. The cement is newly laid; the work will be swift and easy. Lay your chambers in the crypt beyond—fifteen hundred pounds of powder to a charge. I say God hath led us to be the ministers of His wrath—hath led us hither, to this little one spot of all the accursed foundation of an accursed place. We will not leave a broken stone upon a stone. *En avant, mes amis!*'

The men, fired by a fury that was well justified, perhaps, if misconceived, sprang to their task, and disappeared through the wall. Roguet bent above the prostrate figure, and, gently putting a hand to its either cheek, turned the face so that he might look upon it.

'Poor baby!' he said; 'poor bantling! And is it indeed Eugène that brought thee to this?'

She caught at the word, and turned her back on the blind horror and the looming gates of death.

'Eugenio!' she suddenly cried, in a piercing voice. 'Porque

no viene? Why does he not come to me? He said he would come!’

She spoke in her native tongue, putting up her hands a moment, imploring, then clasping them convulsively to her face. Roguet could read her only so far as that her tone penetrated his heart. With a groan he moved and sat by her side on a heap of rubbish, his brows drawn down, his eyes burning redly in the fantastic dance of flame. Now and then he would look up, with a heavy sigh.

‘He cannot have guessed,’ he would mutter. ‘He will weep all his soul out when he knows.’

Again he would glance down.

‘She is like a baby,’ he would think piteously. ‘She hath no line in all her face and neck but the sweet *collet de Vénus*. And they could do it, and she endure. Mon Dieu—it is love, this!’

He sat as in a dream, hearing dreamily the thud and scrape of the busy tools in the wall.

‘So the death-watch taps,’ he murmured grimly. ‘But it signals unregarded of the fools in the vault they have sealed.’

Presently he was surprised to hear a voice at the opening. ‘Captain—the powder!’

He sprang to his feet; fetched and handed bag after bag through the wall.

‘C’est bien fait!’ he cried low. ‘They shall have it to the last grain—to the last grain!’

When all the stock was carried, he scrambled, himself, through the double aperture, and, on the further side—having ordered the extinguishing of every light but that he bore in his hand—chose his *fournearx*, and superintended their diabolical charging with a hard satisfaction. Finally, a reserved bag having been opened, and its contents strewn thickly, so as to communicate with the mines about the floor of the little deadlock vault (into the subterranean wall of which a poor shameful wretch had, but a few hours previously, been built), the sappers attached their quick-firing fuse and returned, preceded by their captain, to the outer cave.

The figure in the staff officer’s brilliant uniform lay as it had been left—breathing, but ashy white.

‘Ventre Dieu!’ gasped François, in immediate inspiration; it is not M. Ducos, but a girl!’



'Lay your fuses,' shouted Roguet, 'and hold your cursed tongue!'

He bent down to the figure—spoke to it—shook it.

'Canst thou not rise and walk?' he cried. 'Time calls upon us imperatively!'

The figure moved, moaned, and uttered some words in a low pitiful voice.

'She says that he promised to come, monsieur,' said François, who still, fuse in hand, dwelt open-mouthed upon his order. The man had a smattering of Spanish. 'She cannot go without him,' he said.

'Without him! Without whom? Say, thou fool, that we will lead her to him; or, stay'—(he came to a rapid decision; struck fist into palm)—'this love, that will not move without its magnet, and then may be drawn across a world!'

'François,' he said, 'stay thou here while I fetch him. We shall not stir her else. And Jules, go before and lay thy train. Forward, and I follow!'

'Roguet—my God!—you come at the good hour!'

'At the good hour, Ducos?'

'Your mines; are they charged?'

'It needs but a flint and steel; you understand?'

The street was full of uproar and of hurrying men. A faint shouting and the damning spatter of musketry sounded to the south-west of the city.

'Listen,' said Ducos. 'We have organised a demonstration to entice all good Spaniards within the sphere of destruction. They come—they come! Fly, my friend, and touch off thy volcano!'

'And what about the portress?'

'The portress!'

The man fell back staring.

'Am I to "touch her off" with the rest?' said Roguet.

'The portress!'

Roguet seized his friend's hand with convulsive energy.

'It is no time to quibble. M. Ducos, we diverged, as a marvellous Providence impelled you to advise us. We struck the wall—cut into it—unearthed a wretched creature buried alive in its midst.'

Ducos stood a moment quite rigid.

'Well?' he said in a voice of iron.

'Eugène!' cried the other in sudden agony; 'for what crime could her devil's order have immured this unhappy child?'

The aide-de-camp stamped in a quick-springing madness of fury.

'What is that now to you or to me? We are servants of the Emperor. You talk, and his moment passes.'

'Think, Eugène!'

'I never think. You confirm me in my creed. If she is dead, what does it matter?'

'She is alive. She cries that you promised to come to her.'

'I will not come, then.'

'And she will not move else. M. Ducos, I cannot fire the mine while she is there.'

'So much the worse for you. We have as short shrift as the Junta for traitors. God in heaven! to set this trifle against the fate of a regiment—against the glory of a cause!'

He turned upon his heel, strode a few paces, then twisted about suddenly, an odd changed expression on his face.

'Pierre!' he cried softly; 'but this is folly! You see the situation. Is it a time to indulge oneself with sentiment? It needs but thy match, and half the city is ours. Wilt thou return to thy duty if I charge thee with a message?'

The other considered.

'Yes,' he said, 'if it be one to move her.'

'It shall move her, I swear. Say only this (he spoke the words very distinctly in Spanish): '*Eugène, who loves thee, is lost if the mine be not fired.* Canst thou get it by heart? Repeat—quick—word for word.'

'Eugenio quien te quiere quedará perdido si no se prende fuego á la mina.'

'That is right. It will serve, believe me.'

.....  
'François!'

'Hush, mon capitaine! You see her restored. She asks what we do here, and I explain as I can.'

'Thou wert a fool.'

'D'accord! But she thinks only of him.'

'Come with me, then.'

He walked over to the girl, who stood leaning, a lantern in her hand, against the very broken crypt from which she had been rescued.

'It is like the desire to look on one's severed arm or leg,' whispered François. 'She must dwell on the accursed hole. She would even have climbed in and examined the scattered powder beyond.'

'They are irreclaimable. Now interpret for me, *mon ami*. Say that I have seen Eugène.'

François stumbled through his task. The girl did not answer, but her haunting eyes dwelt upon Roguet with a questioning dumb intensity.

'Say,' went on the captain, 'that he cannot come, but that he sends a message.'

The eyes never left his face.

'Say this is the message, that I give word for word as from Eugène's lips.'

She uttered a little sound—it was like the sob of a child in its sleep—and stirred for the first time in her place.

'Eugenio quien te quiere quedará perdido si no se prende fuego á la mina.'

With the words on his lips he saw her, to his amazement, whip about, holding the lantern high in her hands.

François gave an agonised yell, '*Ventre Dieu!* my captain! what hast thou said?' and leapt upon her.

He was too late. Shrieking '*Por amor mio*—for my love's sake!' she had flung the flaming light through the hole into the vault beyond.

The blowing up of the convent of the Holy Trinity was a sublime success. But there was one deplorable fact connected with it: the engineer had, it appeared, been 'hoist with his own petard!'

'The poor Roguet went there—not as I—never to return,' said Ducos. 'But then he suffered always from a suffusion of thought to the heart. I shall paint a picture of him some day—noble, self-sacrificing, burrowing like a red badger after roots, while others no better pull the golden apples in the sunshine above. But it is a pity he must present himself for judgment in the midst of such a cloud of damning witnesses. Let us pray for him.'

BERNARD CAPES.

## COLONIAL MEMORIES.

BY LADY BROOME.

‘STELLA CLAVISQUE MARIS INDICI.’

‘THE Star and the Key of the Indian Ocean’ lay smiling before me on Easter Sunday, April 1878.

The little schooner in which I had come across from Natal had just dropped her anchor in the harbour of Port Louis after seventeen days of light and baffling winds. How quickly all the tedium of that past time slipped out of my mind as the fast-growing daylight revealed the beauties of Mauritius, a little island which I had so often read of and yet so little expected ever to behold. The interest of the tragic tale of ‘Paul and Virginia’ had riveted my wandering attention during the French reading-lessons of my youth, though I always secretly wondered why Virginia had been such a goose as to decline help from a sailor, apparently only because he was somewhat insufficiently clad. I should not have dared to give utterance to this opinion, however, so prudish was the domestic atmosphere of those early days.

The first real interest I felt in Mauritius arose from the frequent mention of the little island as a health-resort, in some charming letters of Miss Eden’s published about five-and-twenty years ago, but written long before that date, when she was keeping house for her brother, Lord Auckland, then Governor-General of India. Miss Eden speaks of many friends and Indian tourists (for ‘Paget, M.P.’s’ existed apparently even in those distant times) having gone for change of air to ‘the Mauritius’ and coming back quite strong and robust. She mentions one instance of a whole opera company, whose health gave way in Calcutta, and who made the excursion, returning in time for their next season with restored health, and she often longs in vain for such a change for her hard-worked brother.

But all that must have been many years before the first mysterious outbreak of fever which ravaged the place in 1867. I was assured that before that date the reputation of the pretty little island had stood very high as a sanatorium, but no doctor

could give me any reason for the sudden appearance of this virulent fever. There were, of course, many theories, each of which had earnest supporters. Some said the great hurricane which had just before swept over the island brought the malaria on its wings. Others declared the *déboisement* which had been carried on to a devastating extent in order to increase the area available for sugar-cane planting was to blame; whilst a third faction put all the trouble down to the great influx of coolie immigrants introduced about that date to work in the cane-fields. Perhaps the truth lies in a blending of these three principal theories. Anyway, I felt it sad and hard that so really lovely an island should have such dark and trying days behind as well as before it.

But, after seventeen days of glaring lonely seas and dark monotonous nights, one is not apt to think of anything beyond the immediate 'blessings of the land,' and I gazed with profound content on the chain of volcanic hills, down whose rugged sides many *cascades* tumbled their gleaming silver. Coral reefs, with white foam tossing over them, in spite of the calm sapphire sea on which we were gently floating into harbour, seemed spread all around us, and indeed I believe these *réécifs* circle the whole island with a dangerous though protecting girdle. Sloping ground, covered with growth of differing greens, some showing the bluish hue of the sugar-cane, others the more vivid colouring of a coarse tall grass, led the eye gently down to the flowering trees and foliage round the clustering houses of Port Louis, whose steep high-pitched roofs looked so suggestive of tropic rains. Port Louis was once evidently a stately capital, and large handsome houses still remain. These have, however, nearly all been turned into offices or banks, and the fine large Government House, or *Hôtel du Gouvernement*, is always empty as to its numerous bedrooms. Hardly a white person sleeps with impunity in Port Louis, though all the business—official and private—is carried on there, and it contains many excellent shops.

You must climb up, however, some few miles by the steep little railway before you realise how really lovely the scenery of Mauritius can be. All in miniature, it is true, but very ambitious in character. Except for the glowing tints of the volcanic rocks and the tropic vegetation, one might be looking at a bit of Switzerland through the wrong end of a telescope; but nowhere else have I ever seen such tints as the bare mountain sides take at sunset. The tufa rocks glow like wet porphyry, and so magical are

the hues that one half expects to see the grand recumbent figure of the old warrior of the Corps de Garde hill, outlined against the purple sky, rise up and salute the island which once was his.

Mauritius is in many ways an object-lesson which is not without its significance just now. Here we have a little island thoroughly French in its history and people, and inhabited by many of the *vieille roche* who fled there in the Terror days. Battles between French and English by land and sea raged round its sunny shores in the first few years of the just-ended century. Dauntless attacks and valiant resistance have left heroic memories behind them. We took it by *force majeure* in 1811, but it was not until the great settling up at the Restoration in 1814 that the hatchet may be said to have been finally buried, and the two nationalities began to pull together comfortably. I was rather surprised to see how thoroughly French Mauritius still is in language and in characteristics; but the result is indeed satisfactory. I found it quite the most highly civilised of the colonies I then knew, and from the social point of view there was nothing left to be desired. The early class of French settler had evidently been of a much higher type than our own rough-and-ready colonist, and the refinement so introduced had influenced the whole place. Did I find any race-hatred, oppression, or heart-burnings? No, indeed; of all the dependencies of our Empire, not one has come forward more generously or more splendidly with substantial offers of help than that little lonely isle, 'the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean.' I venture to say, speaking from my experience of those days, that the Queen has no more loyal subjects than the Mauritians.

It may be that the trials and troubles we have all borne there side by side in the past half-century have knitted and bound us together. We have had hurricane, pestilence, and fire to contend with, besides the chronic hard times of the sugar industry. In these fast-following calamities French and English have stood shoulder to shoulder, and the only race or religious rivalry has been in good and noble deeds. In the Zulu war of 1881, when Sir Bartle Frere sent a ship down with despatches to my dear husband, then the Lieutenant-Governor of Mauritius, urgently asking for help to 'hold the fort' until the English reinforcements could arrive, Mauritius sprang to her feet then as now, and gave willing and substantial help. Every soldier who was able to stand up started at twenty-four hours' notice for Durban. The same day the mayor of Port Louis held a meeting, at which a volunteer

corps of doctors and nurses was at once raised, with plenty of money to equip them, and they, as well as cooks and cows—both much needed—were on their way to Durban before another sun had set. It was indeed gratifying to hear afterwards that not only had our little military effort been of great service, but that the abundance of fresh milk supplied had helped many a case of dysentery at Durban among the garrison to turn the corner on the road to recovery.

Nothing can be much more beautiful than the view from the back verandah at 'Réduit,' as the fine country Government House, built by the Chevalier de la Brillane for the Governors of Mauritius more than a century ago, is called. Before you spreads an expanse of English lawn only broken by clumps of gay foliaged shrubs or beds of flowers, and behind that again is the wooded edge of the steep ravine, where the mischievous 'jackos' hide, who come up at night to play havoc with the sugar-canes on its opposite side. The only day of the week on which they ventured up was Sunday afternoon, when all the world was silent and sleepy. It used to be my delight to watch from an upper bedroom window the stealthy appearance of the old sentinel monkeys, who first peered cautiously up and evidently reconnoitred the ground thoroughly. After a few moments of careful scouting a sort of chirrup would be heard, which seemed the signal for the rest of the colony to tumble tumultuously up the bank. Such games as then started among the young ones, such antics and tumblings and rompings! But all the time the sentinels never relaxed their vigilance. They spread like a cordon round the gambolling young ones, and kept turning their horribly wise human-looking heads from side to side incessantly, only picking and chewing a blade of grass now and then. The mothers seemed to keep together, and doubtless gossiped; but let my old and perfectly harmless Skye terrier toddle round the corner of the verandah, and each female would dart into the group of playing monkeys, seize her property by its nearest leg, toss it over her shoulder, and quicker than the eye could follow she would have disappeared down the ravine. The sentinels had uttered their warning cry directly, but they always remained until the very last, and retreated in good order; though there was no cause for alarm, as 'Boxer's' thoughts were on the peacocks, apt to trespass at those silent and unguarded hours, and not on the monkeys at all!

This is a sad digression, but yet it has not led us far from



that halcyon scene, which is so often before the eyes of my memory. The beautiful changing hues of the Indian Ocean bound the horizon in this and every other extensive island view, but between us and it there arises in the distance a very forest of tall green masts, the spikes of countless aloe blossoms. I have heard Mauritius described as 'an island with a barque always to windward,' and there is much truth in the saying; though one could easily mistake the glancing wing of a huge seagull or the long white floating tail-feathers of the 'boatswain bird' for the shimmer of a distant sail.

I fear it is a very prosaic confession to make, but one fact which added considerably to my comfort in Mauritius was the excellence of the cook of that day. I hear that education and Board schools have now improved him off the face of the island, but he used to be a very clever mixture of the best of French and Indian cookery traditions. The food supply was poor. We got our beef from Madagascar, and our mutton came from Aden. We found it answer to import half a dozen little sheep at a time; they cost about 1*l.* apiece for purchase and carriage, but could be allowed only a month's run in the beautiful park of five hundred acres which surrounded Réduit. More than that made them ill, so rich and luscious was the grass; for sheep, like human beings, seem to need a good deal of exercise, and, as Abernethy advised the rich gourmet to do, ought to 'live on a shilling a day and earn it.'

These same sheep, however, or rather one of the servants, gave me one of the worst frights of my life. We were at luncheon one day when an under servant, who never appeared in the dining room, rushed in calling out, 'Oh, Excellence, *quel malheur!*' then he lapsed into Hindustani and patois, declaring there had been a terrible railway accident and that *all* were injured and two killed outright! As this same line, which had a private station in the Park about a mile away, constantly brought us up friends at that hour, I nearly fainted with horror; and yet I remember how angry, though relieved, I felt when the same agitated individual wailed out, 'and they were all so fat!' One is apt to be indignant at having been tricked into emotion before one is grateful for the relief to one's mind.

Almost the first thing which struck me in Mauritius was the absence of cows as well as sheep. I never saw a cow grazing, and yet there seemed plenty of good milk, and even a pallid pat

of fresh butter appeared at breakfast. But there were plenty of cows, only the coolies kept them in their houses, to the despair of the sanitary inspectors, who insisted on proper cowsheds being built at an orthodox distance from the little *case* or native house, only to find that the family moved down and lived with the cow as before. One year there was an outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia among the poor cows, and I heard many pathetic stories of the despair of the owners when sentence of death had to be pronounced in the infected districts against their beloved cows. It was impossible to make the coolies understand that this was a precautionary measure, and the large and liberal compensation which they received seemed to bring no consolation whatever with it. I was assured that in many instances the owner of the doomed animal would fling himself at the inspector's feet, beseeching him to spare the life of the cow, and to kill him (the coolie) instead!

The roads in Mauritius were admirably kept, but very hard and very hilly. The big horse, usually imported from Australia, soon knocked his legs to pieces if much used up and down these hills; but an excellent class of hardy handsome little pony came to us from Pégou and other parts of Burma, as well as from Timor and Java. These animals were very expensive to buy, but excellent for work, and I should think would have made splendid polo ponies; but polo did not seem to be much played in Mauritius at that date.

Since my day another frightful hurricane has devastated the poor little island, but I heard many stories of former ones. During the summer season—that is, from about November until March or April—the local Meteorological Office keeps a sharp eye on the barometer, and every arrangement is cut and dry, ready to be acted upon at a moment's warning, for a *coup de vent* is a rapid traveller and does not dawdle on its way.

We had many false alarms during my stay, for it sometimes happens that the hurrying winds are diverted from the track they started on, and so we escaped *quitte pour la peur*. When the first warning gun fired all the ships in harbour began to get ready to go outside, for the greatest mischief done in the big hurricane of 1868 was from the crowded vessels in the comparatively small harbour of Port Louis grinding against each other; to say nothing of those ships which, as Kipling sings, were

flung to roost with the startled crows,

At the second signal gun, which meant that the force of the wind was increasing and travelling towards us, the ships got themselves out of harbour, and every business man who lived in the country betook himself to the railway station, as after the third gun, which might be heard within even half an hour, the trains would cease to run. I chanced to be returning from Port Louis on one of these occasions, and certainly the railway station presented a curious sight. All my acquaintances seemed to be there, hurrying home with anxious and preoccupied faces. Each man grasped a ham firmly in one hand and his despatch-box in the other, whilst his *pion*, or messenger, was following, closely laden with baskets of bread and groceries, and attended by coolies with live fowls and bottles of lamp oil! My own head servant, 'Monsieur Jorge,' always made the least sign of a 'blow' an excuse for demanding sundry extra rupees in hand for carriage money, and started directly in one of these queer little vehicles for a round of marketing in the neighbourhood.

At the first gun heard at Réduit an army of gardeners used to set to work to move the hundreds of large plants out of the verandahs into a big empty room close by. They were followed by the house-carpenter and his mates, armed with enormous iron wedges and sledge-hammers. These worthies proceeded to close the great clumsy hurricane shutters, which so spoil the outer effect of all Mauritian houses, and besides putting the heavy iron bars in their places, wedged them firmly down. It really looked as if the house was being prepared for a siege. Happily, my own experience did not extend beyond a couple of days of this state of affairs, nor was any storm I assisted at dignified by the name of a hurricane, but I could form from these little experiences only too good an idea of what the real thing must be like. Personally, my greatest inconvenience arose from the pervading smell of the lamps, which were, of course, burning all day as well as all night, and from our never being able to get rid of the smell of food. One was so accustomed to the fresh-air life, with doors and windows always open, that these odours were very trying. But the noise is, I think, what is least understood. Even in a 'blow' it is truly deafening, and never ceases for an instant. At Réduit there was a long well-defended corridor upstairs, and I thought I would try and walk along its length. Not a breath of wind really got in, or the roof would soon have been whisked off the house; but although I flatter myself I am tolerably brave, I could not walk

down that corridor! Every yard or so a resounding blow, as if from a cannon-ball, would come thundering against the outer side, whilst the noise of many waters descending in solid sheets on the roof, and the screams of the shrieking, whistling winds outside, were literally deafening. It was impossible to believe that any structure made by human hands could stand; and yet that was not a hurricane! Never shall I forget my last outdoor glimpse, which I was invited to take just before the big hall-door on the leeward side was finally shut and barricaded. I could not have believed that the sky could be of such an inky blackness, except at one corner, where a triangle of the curtain of darkness, with sharply defined outlines, had apparently just been turned back to show the deep blood-red colouring behind. It was awful beyond all words to describe; but 'Monsieur Jorge,' who held the door open for me, said: 'Dat not real bad sky.' He seemed hard to please, I thought.

However, a couple of days' imprisonment was all we suffered that time, and the instant the gale dropped, at sunrise on the second day, the rain ceased and the sun shone out. It was a curious scene the opened shutters revealed. Every leaf was stripped off the trees, which were bare as midwinter. A few of the smaller ones had been uprooted bodily and whisked away down the ravine. Some were found later literally standing on their heads a good way off. It was quite a new idea to me that roots could be snowy white, but they had been so completely washed bare of soil by the downpouring rain that they were absolutely clean and white. A few hours later I was taken for a drive round some neighbouring cane-fields. Of course the road was like the bed of a mountain torrent, and how the pony managed to steer himself and the gig among the boulders must ever remain a mystery. Already over three hundred Malagashes (coolies) were at work covering up the exposed roots of the canes, for each plant stood in a large hole partly filled with water, which was rapidly draining away. The force of the wind seemed to have whirled the cane round and round until it stood, quite bare of its crown of waving leaves, in the middle of a hole. Had the sun reached these exposed roots nothing could have saved the plant.

But my memories must not be all meteorological. Rather let me return in thought to the merry and happy intercourse with pleasant friends, of which so many hours stand brightly out. In all the colonies I know hospitality is one of the cardinal virtues, and

nowhere more so than in pretty little Mauritius. I heard many lamentations that in these altered times the gracious will far outran the restricted possibilities, but still there were pleasant *chasses*, most amusing cameron-fishing *déjeuners*, and dances without end and number.

It was always great fun when the flagship of the East Indian squadron paid us an all too brief visit; and, indeed, the arrival of any man-of-war would be made an excuse for a little extra gaiety. I used to specially delight in getting the midshipmen to come in batches and stay at Réduit, although I often found myself at my wits' end to provide them with game to shoot at, for that was what their hearts were most fixed on. They all brought up weird and obsolete fowling-pieces, which the moment they had finished breakfast they wanted to go and let off in the park. What fun those boys were, and what dears! One chubby youth, being questioned as to whether midshipmen were permitted to marry, answered, 'No, but sometimes there was a *candlestick marriage*.'

'A *what*?'

'A candlestick marriage, sir—not allowed, you know.'

'Clandestine' was the proper word, but it had a great success as a joke.

My young soldier guests were quite as gallant and susceptible to the charms of the bright eyes and pretty, gentle manners of my pet French girls, but I often felt disconcerted to find that at my numerous *bals privés* there was a difficulty in getting them to dance with each other, because the red-coated youths would not or could not speak one word of French, whereas that difficulty never seemed to weigh with the middy for a moment.

I dare say that it is no longer the case now, and that improved mail and cable services have changed the loneliness of my day, when there was no cable beyond Aden and only a mail steamer once a month. I always felt as though we ourselves were on a ship anchored in the midst of a lonely ocean, and that once in four weeks another ship sped past us, casting on board mail bags and cablegrams. But even as we stood with stretched-out hands, craving for more news or more details of what news was flung to us, the passing steamer had sunk below the horizon, and we were left to possess our souls in what patience we might until the next mail day came round.

## IN A BARREN AND DRY LAND.

## I.

WHILE war to the death is being fought out in one division of our Empire, in another a far different struggle is afoot whose object is not death but life. It is a quiet war eclipsed by that of arms, little gazed on by the public eye, yet not without dangers untempered by romance, or defeats which no comradeship may lighten. In 1897 the famine which raged in India touched this country to the quick, and the result was that vast national subscription, the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund. This year our aid is asked for a cause still nearer and dearer than the suffering Indian. But India has not forgotten former generosity; often in the last few months natives have spoken to me with feeling of the aid sent 'by the Queen' or 'by the mother-country' (their ideas are not always clear), and have asked if they may hope to look for it again. Indeed, the occasion but for greater calls is pressing enough.<sup>1</sup>

Each year produces in India two crops: the *kharif*, or autumn crop, which is sown in June, or as soon as the rain-laden currents of the south-west trade winds have broken upon the scorched peninsula. This crop consists of rice and various kinds of millet: it is reaped about November. And then the *rabi*, or winter crop, is sown, consisting of wheat and pulse which are reaped about April. Both crops depend upon the character of the monsoon: if it is copious, fairly sustained, and varied with timely breaks of fair weather, then the autumn crop will give a large yield, and the earth will remain sufficiently moist for the germination of the winter seeds, whose plants only require a few days (traditionally three) of Christmas rain to bring them to perfection. In 1896 the monsoon did not fail; it gave copious rain; but this rain, after falling heavily, ceased prematurely, and the *kharif*, already well sprung up, withered away; the *rabi*, aided by winter rain, did generally well, but the area sown could not avert the famine of 1897, which was the result of the failure of one crop. This year the rains have failed utterly, many districts receiving only an insignificant fraction of their

<sup>1</sup> This was written before the opening of the Mansion-House Fund.—H. S.

due ; thus, not only has the *kharif* failed, but the ground has in many parts proved too hard for the sowing, or, if sowing has been attempted, for the germination of the *rabi*. Thus the famine of 1899-1900 will result from the failure of both crops. In 1897 fodder was generally sufficient for the cattle ; to-day the cattle are dying in their thousands owing to want of food and the diseases which follow in the train of starvation. In 1897 the water supply did not give grave cause for anxiety ; to-day there is many an Indian village in which not one well holds water. In 1897 the calamity fell upon people backed by the resources of many years of plenty (only in Bundelkhand and some northern parts of the Central Provinces had there been previous distress) ; to-day many districts are called on to meet a fresh attack while they are still staggering under the blow of the year before last.

What is the aspect of a country which lies under the ban of famine ? Our imagination summons up deserted villages ; fields devoid of crops, and only whitened by the bones of cattle, perhaps of men ; moanings for succour, and crowds of hopeless skeletons.

It was my fate to spend the greater part of 1897 in a district where some of this ideal was realised—a district far removed from railways, possessing but a few miles of road which would not in the wet season melt into a hopeless quagmire ; a land of intractable mountains and impenetrable forests, of isolated villages, often inhabited, not by Hindus, but by half-savage aborigines, driven up into these inhospitable regions before the Aryan invader ; their cultivation the rudest, their resources the slenderest, and their habits too timid and suspicious to allow them to accept the proffered aid. The isolation and physical difficulties of the tract, the sparseness of the population (it has been well remarked that the difficulties of dealing with famine are in inverse ratio to the density of the population), the peculiar character of the people, and the novelty of meeting so grave a disaster under circumstances so adverse made failure almost a foregone conclusion. Yet, although the mortality resulting from actual starvation and its attendant satellites, fever, dysentery, and cholera, was immense, still there is to-day many an upland village where, if the visitor asks who in it was saved two years back by the aid of the *Sirkar* (Government), practically the whole population will come forward. The circumstances in that district were abnormal ; and hence, though much was achieved, much also, painful to eye and ear, occurred there during the darkest months of 1897. But now I am to speak of another and a more representative locality.



It is not the most sorely stricken part of India ; yet the intensity of the distress may be gauged from the fact that at the end of November more than 22 per cent. of the entire population were in receipt of Government relief, and this notwithstanding every effort of the district authorities to limit as far as possible the number of recipients.

## II.

Let us take, then, one of the so-called 'plateau districts' of the Central Provinces, a district which suffered sorely enough in 1897, but where the potentiality of suffering to-day is greater still. As we drive the sixty odd miles that separate the nearest railway station from the district headquarters, the road takes us first through a level and well-populated tract. Then come jungles ; and presently we ascend a lofty hill-slope, between thick forests and towering hills, the abode of tiger, bison, and bear. On reaching the summit a broad upland plain opens before us, measuring across from north to south from fifty to sixty miles, and held up, as it were, at an elevation of from two to three thousand feet above sea-level by the shoulders of the Satpura Mountains, till on its southern boundary it suddenly breaks down, sometimes with a sheer drop, sometimes through a tangle of wild ravines, to the broad plain of the Deccan. The upland portion is inhabited by Hindus, congregated in large villages ; it includes, besides *kharif* land, a very large area of *rabi* land, producing in ordinary years a valuable wheat crop. The people are fully alive to their own needs and interests, and all that is requisite is to place the means of preservation within their grasp, enforcing a sufficient test to exclude the less needy. But on the mountain slopes, which sink to the Nerbudda valley on the north and the Deccan plain on the south, as well as in certain scattered jungles on the plateau itself, the Hindu element ceases ; there dwells the shy Dravidian aboriginal in his remote hamlet ; and special measures must be adopted to entice him to his own salvation. There is something striking in the scenery of these hill slopes, especially on the southern border, where they are peculiarly steep and sudden. Were it not for the dry keen air, the upland plain suggests no impression of elevation. It is undulating, bare, and bleak, but well cultivated, and dotted here and there with populous villages and bosky mango groves. One ascends a gentle jungle-covered slope, and in a moment the land seems to break away below ; and there, a thousand feet

beneath, stretches the great southern plain, its fields and forests barred with morning mist, or shining with a bluish glare under the midday sun. One descends into the intervening strip of hill and jungle, and both the upper and the lower plains vanish; all around rise inhospitable peaks, divided by deep, and often rocky, gullies. Here it is as hard to believe that those same peaks support on their very tops a broad and populous champaign as it was, when standing above them, to realise that but a few steps would disclose the seemingly endless plain breaking down in sudden cliffs to the sea-like levels below. It is in this strip, sometimes but a couple of miles broad, sometimes stretching up long glens into the interior, that, wedged between two civilisations, savagery still holds its own. There dwell the Kurkus, reduced to a mere handful, remnants of an ancient Kolarian stock; there too, far more numerous and scarcely less ancient, is found the Dravidian race of Gonds—the most important of the aboriginal races that still haunt the highlands of Central India. Among the main range and the offshoots of these Satpura mountains the Gonds form a large fraction of the population, ever choosing as their homes the most inaccessible retreats. Both physically and ethically they are divided into numerous sections, each more or less sunk in savagery or imbued with civilisation. Thus, the Marya Gond is still a naked savage; the Raj Gond, on the other hand, is, by birth and by way of living, almost a Hindu. The Gonds of the district of which I speak lie midway between these two types. The majority of them have laid aside their distinctive language (which resembles the gibbering of bats), the poisoned arrow, the destructive *dhya* cultivation, and other characteristics of their race. But they still retain the dark skin, the Mongolian cast of feature, the general disregard of dress. In some of the remote villages they still flee at a *sahib's* approach. Their women are tattooed with blue marks. Their gods are many; their kinds of marriage scarcely less so. They practise and fear witchcraft. The new régime has suppressed human sacrifice; but they rejoice in offerings of beasts, chiefly the snow-white cock. Their villages are evil-smelling collections of huts, in each of which a rough frame of poles supports a grass roof: the walls are of grass and leaves plastered scantily with unsavoury mud. Within are the mud-built grain-bins, the only solid part about the edifice. In these huts the people herd with their cattle, pigs, and fowls. They are passionately fond of their homes (this *heimweh* is a distinct obstacle to famine relief), and they can hardly be per-

suaded to undertake any work which will prevent their return to the village at night. When arrived there, they shut themselves in their huts, closing every aperture in the cold weather; they have no artificial light in the dark hours; they possess no blankets, and often an entire village cannot boast of a single bed. The site chosen for these quaint collections of dwellings is almost invariably the ridge of a hill, running down steeply to a torrent below. Among large sections of the Gonds wells are quite unknown; when summer has dried up the stream the people scoop water-holes (called *jhireas*) in the bed. If the bed is rocky they drink from stagnant pools and die of cholera. In the fringe of jungle where they dwell there is little or no *rabi* land; the Gonds depend upon the *kharif* crop; they grow but little rice, sowing instead *juari* (*Sorghum vulgare*)—which is also a staple autumn produce throughout this district, as well as in most of the dry parts of India—and two small millets (*kodon* and *kutki*) peculiar to Gond-land, of which they make a rough porridge. This fare is eked out with jungle produce—roots, berries, and leaves, but chiefly the sweet juicy blossoms of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), which they dry and knead into bread, and from which the intoxicating liquor to which the Gonds are addicted is distilled.

It is among these aboriginal villages, rather than in the populous upland plain, that the death-rate may be expected to give cause for anxiety. The people are shy, suspicious of interference, callous as to the future. The country is difficult and forbidding. A sombre melancholy seems to pervade the leafless woods and lowering hills that tower up at evening range beyond range, silhouetted against the faint daffodil of the Indian after-glow. The rude village in the foreground, with no light to give the homelike air of comfort, seems to lie beleaguered by the forces of a relentless power. It is like a land of the hopeless, the forgotten; heaven has closed her windows; the mountains girdle it with isolation. It is as though Nature had determined to destroy the laggards in the race for existence.

### III.

But as one rides through the fields of the high plateau on a brisk November morning there is no suggestion of any widespread calamity. The sunshine is bright, the air is keen, the villages slumber under their groves of mango or glittering *pipal*. The

fields, indeed, are devoid of labourers ; but here and there patches of emerald green show where some sanguine cultivator has risked the loss of his *rabi* seedstore. A close inspection, however, shows that this cheerful aspect is deceptive. The shoots of the *rabi* have begun to wither ; already the tips of the wheat seedlings have turned white. The garnerers are empty, for the *kharif* has failed utterly. Here stands a field of *juari* : in ordinary seasons the plants would be green and healthy, often seven feet in height, and tipped with nodding bunches of grain ; this year the crop is stunted, white and dry, only here and there the grain-cobs made their appearance, and then if one so much as touches them they fall into sooty dust, like apples of Sodom ; *kānhi* (black rust) has destroyed even this meagre outturn. Already the cattle have been let loose into these fields to eat the crop, or the people are gathering the dry rustling stems to serve as fodder. Their utility, even for this purpose, is doubtful ; in years of drought a salt is secreted in the stem of the *juari* plant, which, unless removed by long soaking, proves poisonous to cattle. As for the rice, it could but just spring up, and will not even afford straw. The lesser millets, *kodon* and *kutki*, have eared in favourable spots, but the ears are mere empty husk : the people throw them to the cattle, or bring them as bedding for your horse, without attempting the useless work of threshing. The maize has long ago been cut down without having produced a single cob. All is desolate ; but suddenly a familiar sound strikes the ear. It resembles that of the mowing-machine, and recalls the mind to pleasant English hayfields. But even this sound, when heard in November, is fraught with dreadful significance. It means the destruction of the sugar-cane—that most remunerative crop, whose cultivation requires capital, and can be attempted only by the most substantial farmers, for the saving of which, moreover, no efforts would be spared. Here are the sugar-cane enclosures, carefully fenced round against the depredations of beasts. In one the canes have already withered, sharing the fate of the un-irrigated *juari* ; another is still kept alive by a slender trickle of water, raised with infinite labour and much creaking from a forty-foot well. Slowly the bullocks draw a long rope bearing the *mot* (an ingeniously contrived leather bucket) to the surface ; and slowly they back towards the well, to lower it for a fresh supply. If you look down you see that there is, perhaps, a bare half-foot of water in one corner of the well-bottom. The drivers tell you they can work only one hour at a time, and must then wait for the water

to replenish itself; a few more days, and irrigation will become impossible. But the noise, like that of a mowing-machine, comes from the sugar-press—a rough arrangement of spirally fluted wooden rollers—in which, four months before its time, a miserable outturn of juice is being extracted.

In the morning and the evening picturesque groups gather round these irrigation wells—women with brazen water-vessels on their heads and herds of patient cattle. For the ordinary drinking-wells in the village are dry, and the tanks and rivers, where the cattle are usually watered, are reduced to spaces of cracked mud or torrid beds of black rock. For beasts, as well as for men, the precious fluid must be raised from the bowels of the earth. In the jungle tracts, where the paucity of wells makes the supply of drinking water yet more precarious, the cattle fare better. There is still a meagre supply of grass in the forests; and the mountain rivers have bored deep holes in the rock, which here and there will hold water for many months—but such water! Sometimes a livid green, sometimes a lurid red. Hence these jungles, ordinarily deserted and abandoned to wild beasts, are now traversed in every direction by paths formed by droves of cattle, driven up from the waterless Deccan plain. Rinderpest and anthrax have been busy among these crowded half-starved herds, and the banks of the fetid pools are strewn with the bones of the victims; high up in the pitilessly blue sky the vultures circle, waiting for the next death and the next meal.

The forests themselves are gaunt and devoid of leaves at a time of year when all should be bright and green. The Indian October, when the long rainy season gives place again to a clear sky, is a month of chill misty mornings, heavy dews, luxuriant grass and leafage—when the sun draws up the moisture of the soaked forests, and renders the climate deadly with ague and malaria. This October was devoid of its usual characteristics, and resembled May. The nights were dewless, the mornings dry and airless. As the sun rose higher the hot wind came wuthering over the parched ground, crackling among the parched branches, as in the fierce summer weather. At night I found it necessary to sleep outside, without the covering even of a sheet—a practice which in ordinary seasons would ensure a serious attack of fever. Even the trees mistook the signs of the times: flowers and fruits, proper to April, made their appearance in November; the beautiful red *palas* burst into bloom; the precious *mahua* blossom budded on the trees, but was scorched up before ripening. The aboriginal

tribes are thus deprived of their beloved jungle products—not altogether an unmixed curse, since it was abundantly proved in 1897 that the annual emigration into the woods in search of these disorganised the system of relief, and led the Gonds to despise the proffered aid, so that when the rains drove them back to their homes their constitutions, weakened by unwholesome diet, succumbed to the unhealthy season before help could reach them.

These portents have filled the minds of the people with terror; within the memory of the eldest there lives no record of such a season. Only one hope is left to them. It was but the other day that the head constable of a neighbouring police-station came mysteriously, and under cover of night, to my tent. A rumour had gone abroad that one of the large and sacred rivers of India, which rises in these highlands, had again begun to flow without help of rain, and after months of cloudless weather had dried its bed. He had been to investigate, and found the tale only too true. Foreseeing the possibility of damming this sacred flow, I rode to the river the ensuing morning. It was a spot where a tributary ran into the main stream. The confluence of rivers is ever a place of sanctity to the Hindu, and the tongue of land between was covered with ancient shrines. The water was indeed flowing for the space of half a mile, till it lost itself in a broad bed of shingles; the heat-cracked mud below the shallow stream showed that it had been covered only within the last few hours. On following up the origin of the wonder I found that the current originated, not in the sacred stream, but in its despised tributary, and was doubtless due to an intermittent spring. I turned to the natives, and asked their explanation of the mystery. At once they replied, 'God and the Government.' They have besieged the temples with droning chants and the ceaseless rolling of drums, but their gods have sent no relief. Now, mindful of the good work wrought two years back, they have turned their eyes to their rulers. And how are their expectations answered?

#### IV.

The Government of India has saddled itself with the responsibility of saving human life in time of famine. The humanitarian aspect of the policy is unassailable; nor can its economic aspect be called in question, where, as is the case in the districts here described, the demand is for labour rather than for land. Given a sufficiency of funds, the difficulties of carrying out this

policy resolve themselves ordinarily into three—the supply of a distributing staff, the prevention of peculation, the conveyance of relief into the hands of the proper recipients. In the wilder tracts two extra difficulties present themselves—the question of locomotion in a country of great distances beset with physical obstacles, and the persuasion of the aboriginal tribes to accept organised aid. The system of relief is twofold. First, there is relief to the able-bodied, in return for which a *quid pro quo* in the shape of labour is demanded. When the returns of the revenue officials show that the existence of distress in any locality is to be apprehended, test works are started with a view to gauging the actual situation. In 1897 piece-work was introduced on relief works; the result, especially among the less civilised races, was not entirely satisfactory. This year the so-called ‘intermediate system’ has been utilised for purposes of test and relief. On this system payment is not reckoned by the amount of work done; a fixed wage is given for a fixed task; but if the work is not completed, fines are inflicted, and there is no minimum of wage. The task, however, is light; and the wage (calculated by the current price of that amount of the cheapest available grain which is necessary to keep a working man, woman, or child in good health) is sufficiently high to have attracted the families even of those who are not reduced to distress. Local inquiry and the tentative raising and lowering of the task and the wage respectively are necessary in order to establish an equilibrium. This is a matter demanding the utmost care and circumspection, so imperative is it at once to husband the resources at hand, and at the same time to avoid putting an undue strain upon the really distressed, who, if once frightened off the works, would probably refuse to return, preferring to ‘qualify’ (by the attainment of a certain degree of emaciation) for gratuitous relief. By an ingenious contrivance, it has been arranged that, as distress deepens and the vitality of the people becomes impaired, the ‘intermediate system’ can by a stroke of the pen, and without dislocating the previous organisation, be transformed into the ‘task system,’ whereby fines are limited, and a minimum wage is fixed. It is doubtful if the change will be found necessary; I believe that the present system, augmented by the establishment of a few infirm gangs, will be found workable till the return of prosperity. Such is the method on which the large relief works (under the direct management of the Public Works Department, but inspected and regulated by the



administrative authorities of the district) are organised. These are the backbone of relief operations, at least during the open months. Each district contains several large camps, furnished with a staff, a supply of tools, a sufficiency of money to pay the workers, and a sufficiency of grain-shops to turn their wages into food. Each of these camps draws from six to ten thousand workers. The work done is one of public utility, generally the making of a road—earth-embanking, digging out cuttings, the collection and breaking of metal. The labourers are divided into gangs containing a proper proportion of ‘diggers’ and ‘carriers’ or ‘rezas.’ Men, women, and children all have their appointed work and remuneration; the seats of the mighty are at present perplexed by the question whether the wages of men and women should on physical grounds be the same or different; the question in reality resolves itself, since hardly any woman is strong enough to dig; hence all the gentler sex ‘carry;’ and the wage of a ‘carrier’ or ‘reza’ is lower than that of a ‘digger.’ A single ‘charge’ (as such a relief work is called) may contain as many as a hundred gangs. Each gang is generally composed of people from the same village: they work well together, and families are thus kept united. Some villager of approved probity heads the gang with the title of ‘mate:’ he draws higher pay, and keeps the people up to their work. The organisation is astonishing. As one rides down the long line of ‘gangs,’ each ‘mate,’ resplendent in a red badge bearing the distinctive ‘gang number,’ rushes forward and thrusts under one’s eyes the ‘gang roll,’ which shows the numbers of each class of workers. One selects a gang at haphazard for purposes of checking: in a moment it is lined up, class by class, along the road. Over the ‘mates’ are the ‘moharrirs,’ each of whom superintends and pays some ten or more gangs. Over all is the ‘officer in charge,’ some well-educated and trustworthy native, who is responsible for the organisation and working of the whole. A special officer is deputed to measure up the work done; another keeps the tool-store. A native surgeon is established at each camp, with hastily erected hospitals, and supplies of quinine and permanganate of potash: he superintends the children’s kitchen. A body of temporary police must be organised to guard the treasure-chests. The main camp presents an animated and orderly scene. The officer in charge is forming new gangs from the latest arrivals, interrupted now and then, as the ‘moharrirs’ ride in with reports from distant parts of the work; the tool-store is issuing picks

and spades; the children, neatly numbered with tin tickets, are flocking to their meal of rice and pulse. At night the workers bivouac by the side of the road. Each family seats itself round a fire and prepares the evening meal. For six miles or more the country is traversed by a line of flickering bonfires. As the flames die down the workers wrap themselves in their blankets and sleep round the embers. There is nothing sordid or miserable about these camps. The people, if relieved in time, retain their energy and good spirits. The horrors of famine are not merely averted—they are concealed under a scene of animation and activity. Many trifling difficulties present themselves on these large works. The numbers of workers and the large area over which each 'charge' extends demand constant and laborious inspection. The staff must be carefully selected with a view to honesty. Often it is difficult to supply sufficient copper coin to pay each individual worker. Above all there is the question of water supply; the work may have to be extended through tracts where for miles there is hardly a well, perhaps only a few stagnant pools; the native's capacity for drinking water is phenomenal, especially when he is at work all day under a tropical sun. If these thousands of labourers cannot be supplied with pure water, they will have been saved from starvation only to perish by cholera. To meet this difficulty numbers of water-carts (save for absence of the sprinkler identical with those that water the streets at home) have been imported from great distances to these remote uplands. Over the rough side-roads, often over no roads at all, they bring water from guarded and disinfected sources. At stated intervals along the work neat little huts have been erected. Here the water is stored in clean metal tanks; and in each of these sits a 'giver of water,' a person of good caste, from whose hands all may drink, who dispenses his store to the thirsty through a long tin pipe. Each customer in his turn squats before the end of this pipe, and conveys the falling stream by means of his hands to his mouth, after the usual Oriental method. Thus all can drink, and none need be defiled.

These large works are the backbone of relief. But there are some classes who cannot make use of them. There are cultivators who still have some precarious standing crops, or who fear to leave their cattle. For these work must be provided in the village. The task of supplying it falls to the civil authorities, and is carried out by the 'relief officer,' or, as he is now styled,

'charge officer.' It is his duty to discover where such works are urgently required, and to establish a network of them sufficient to employ all who cannot leave their homes. These works have to be on a small scale (not more than three hundred are admitted on any single work), because the unlettered village authorities, to whom the organisation must be largely entrusted, cannot grapple with a larger number. On the other hand they must be many, and are necessarily spread over a large area. The task of commencing these small works is no light one. Some object of public utility in the village must be selected (the clearing of some old tank, the deepening of the village well, the embanking of Ram Baksh's field, the collection of stones off Narayan Rao's *rabi* land); the number of workers must be calculated; a task must be prescribed, an estimate made out; funds must be made over to the village headman; forms for registers and returns must be explained; and, hardest of all, provision must be made for future employment when the present work and funds are exhausted. Then, again, there are classes unfitted by their hereditary profession for the harder forms of manual labour. There are weavers, to whom advances must be made (for no one in these distressful times can afford to buy new clothes, and trade is at a standstill); the shepherds must be set to make blankets; the produce of both may be distributed gratis among the unclad poor; and thus a double charity is done, and the work of relief becomes twice blest. The fashioners of vessels of clay or stone are employed to make platters for the 'kitchen children,' who otherwise would eat off leaves.

The second great division of relief is that termed 'gratuitous.' No labour is exacted from the recipients. It is intended for those only who through disease or deformity, the care of many children, old age, or tender years, are incapable of doing a day's work. It is mainly distributed in three ways. First, there is relief extended to the 'dependants' of labourers upon the large relief works: these are chiefly children, who are maintained in large kitchens. Doles, too, are given for babes at the breast, or for some antiquated relative—some Anchises whom the stalwart son, Æneas-like, has carried from the desolation of his ancestral home. Secondly, there are 'village kitchens.' These are intended primarily for children, but also for any starving wanderers who may solicit aid, or for adults incapable of doing their own marketing and cooking. The whole country is mapped out into groups of villages, in each of which a kitchen is established under

the management of the village schoolmaster, the village headman, or, if the neighbourhood can boast of none capable of reading and writing, some literate 'moharrir,' whom the wage of a few coppers a day will persuade to reside in savage exile. These groups are so arranged that every single child, save those of the tenderest years, can walk twice a day to the central kitchen village, and twice a day consume his daily dole under the eyes of the manager. Troops of children, attended by some few anxious parents or by the village watchman, may be seen in every direction marching to their repasts, labelled and docketed with tin tickets, on which are blazoned the name and parentage of each child, his serial number, the amount of food he shall receive, and the initials of the officer responsible for his registration. These kitchens are a most satisfactory and important item in famine-relief operations. It is the lives of the future generation that must be most carefully husbanded; and it is just these that first succumb to the pinch of starvation; moreover it was abundantly shown in the previous famine that parents who receive money doles for their children apply them to other purposes. In times when mankind is brought face to face with crude and elemental calamity the ties even of closest relationship are broken; the mother starves the child that she may add a few ounces to her own daily ration. Thirdly, there is the elaborate organisation of 'house-to-house' relief, or, as it is generally called, 'village relief.' This is worked through the revenue officers under the civil authorities. All those incapable of work, the aged, the blind, the lame, the lepers, the great with child, are brought on to village registers, and receive a daily payment sufficient to keep them alive. Three per cent. of the population is prescribed as an ideal limit for this form of relief; but in a country which has not yet recovered from a previous famine the numbers will be larger. In 1897 in some of the more distant aboriginal villages during the rainy season, it was found necessary to bring sixty or seventy per cent. of the people upon the rolls; and thus whole villages were practically supported by Government till the ripening of the crops put an end to the calamity. The means of conveying the money to the recipients is as follows. Each district is, for purposes of revenue collection, permanently divided into circles, each of which is provided with a revenue inspector, drawing pay at the rate of about 30*l.* per annum. Under each of these inspectors is a number of lesser officials, called *patwaries*,

who keep the village maps and records. In times of famine the number of inspectors is doubled or even trebled: these officers, who are placed under the orders of the 'relief officer' (or 'charge officer'), bring the names of all who are deserving of village relief upon the register which is maintained in each village. The pay given is just sufficient to preserve the recipients: it is drawn from the nearest treasury by the inspectors, who either distribute it themselves once a fortnight to each village headman or hand it over to the *patwaries* for direct distribution to the sufferers. The work of the inspector is arduous, as he has generally some seventy villages under his charge.

It may be asked whether it is not insufficient to give money in a country where prices rule at famine rate and grain is scarce. Should not Government take upon itself the importation and distribution of foodstuffs? The answer, dictated by the experience of several famines, is that private trade is sufficient to meet all demands, while Government interference is always costly and often ends in failure. At the commencement of distress panic seizes the people; prices fluctuate wildly; the grain dealers see the chance of immense profits; corn is held up or offered at exorbitant rates. During this transition period Government does what it can by offering advances on liberal terms for the sale of grain at reasonable prices. But as soon as the country has settled down to a status of famine, and it is known that relief in money is being liberally given by Government, grain begins to pour even into remote tracts; and, as distress deepens, prices actually fall, though always ruling high. Thus importation, influenced by the laws of economy, spares the Government the almost impossible task of distributing grain in districts where it is often difficult to supply with sufficient rapidity even so portable a commodity as coin. There is, however, one exception to the rule; and this leads me on to speak of the special steps necessary for the relief of the aboriginal tribes.

The two main difficulties which render it necessary to modify the system of relief in the case of these less civilised people have already been indicated—their aversion to organisation and the intractable nature of the country they inhabit. To meet the former it has been found necessary, in place of trusting to the large relief works, to institute a number of small works, so located that the people can return each night to their homes. This year centres have been chosen for grass-cutting operations and placed under the management of the Forest Department. This is a kind

of labour congenial to the wild tribes and highly useful in a season when fodder will be terribly scarce. Some of the Gonds, however, on account of the isolation of their villages or out of sheer 'cussedness,' cannot be induced to attend works. In 1897 I frequently found men who had a few weeks before been able-bodied, who lived in villages but half a mile from some work where admission was easy and pay liberal, who had yet preferred to sit foodless at their doors watching the toilers, till they themselves were reduced to a state past all recovery. Their explanation of this behaviour was always the same: '*Kam ne banta,*' which may be translated, 'We can't work,' or, more properly, 'We won't work.' The only remedy for such is an early application of village relief or, if available, of kitchen relief. As regards the second difficulty I am bound to say that in 1897, though I was in one of the least accessible districts in all India, I found one small spot, and only one, where it was anything like impossible to exchange the money provided by Government for the necessities of life. But there are other reasons for paying the aborigines in grain, as well as the possible insufficiency of supplies. The Gond is a lover of strong drink, and if he becomes suddenly possessed of a considerable round sum, he often proceeds upon the 'bust.' Moreover, he is superstitious; and if hunger has made him feel unwell, I have often found that he would spend his money in the purchase of a sacrifice, believing that the gods, thereby appeased, would restore him to health. The result generally was that the gods got but little of the sacrificial goat, while the Gond died from the effects of an ample and unaccustomed meal.

To prevent the recurrence of such accidents Government has undertaken, not indeed the importation, but the distribution of coarse grain in lieu of payment. Substantial merchants have been persuaded to open stores of *juari* in the forest tracts, whence the forest officials distribute a daily measure (ranging from nearly two pounds downward per worker) in exchange for a head-load of grass brought into the grass depôt or for a day's labour on some form of employment. The extension of this system to village relief is at present under contemplation; but a liberal working of village kitchens renders this further step less imperative.

While the population is thus saved from starvation it is less easy to provide for the cattle. Grass is scarce, and the straw from the withered crops is stunted. Something has been effected by the depôts for grass-collecting. But it is to be feared that unless the monsoon of 1900 breaks early these districts may share

the fate of other portions of India, and the mortality among cattle may be heavy.

## V.

Having provided for food the authorities have to consider the still more difficult question of water. It is the failure of the ordinary water-sources that has terrified the people almost more than the destruction of their crops. The improvement of the water supply is the task of the famine relief officer. In almost every village wells have to be deepened; in Gond villages, where there are none, new ones must be dug. The work serves as a small relief work in each village; and, the expenses being defrayed entirely by Government, there is considerable competition among the villagers as to whose well shall be deepened. Applications for well-sinking flow in with overwhelming rapidity; but the less civilised folk, who are generally the worst off, suffer in silence, or only make known their wants when the relieving officer visits their village. If there should happen to be a good well in the place, the people often try to hide its existence, showing only those wells that have dried up. It is therefore necessary to watch for the stream of women coming and going with their brazen water-vessels gracefully poised on their heads, and track the tell-tale procession to the water supply. Generally, however, this proves to be merely a trickle at the bottom of some deep well, where the people must sit and wait in turn hour after hour, till sufficient of the muddy fluid has collected to fill a pitcher. Then comes the question as to which well offers the best chance of successful excavation. Each owner of an irrigation well claims this attribute for his own, and points out how his sugar-cane or his wheat-field is doomed to wither if some aid is not accorded to him. Those who have no such interests declare that the village well, where all may draw, and always have drawn, should claim the first attention. The question is complicated by the coexistence in each community of two castes—the purer Hindus and Gonds on the one hand, the weavers on the other. No weaver may draw from the well of the Hindus lest it be defiled; nor will the Hindu drink from the hands or the well of a weaver. Thus it becomes necessary either to dig two wells or to depute a certain number of the Hindu element to give water to their less exalted fellow-villagers. The choice of a well should be made solely with reference to the chance of its affording a good supply. Low ground, near some dry river-bed, is the most promising.



Wells that penetrate rock should be avoided, first because their deepening is expensive; secondly, because the chance of finding water is small, especially where, as in this neighbourhood, the common rock is black basalt. When the choice has been made, the breadth and depth of the well must be measured; an estimate must be drawn up, based on these data and the nature of the soil to be excavated. Then money for the wages of the labourers must be made over to the headman, and the methods of working and account-keeping have to be explained. Often special tools must be supplied—heavy pickaxes, crowbars, iron mallets, and ‘jumpers.’ If the rock is hard, powder must be given, and professional well-sinkers, skilled in the art of blasting, must be despatched to the spot. Several of these are permanently employed by each relief officer. All this must be done in a country where resources are difficult to obtain. Then the work must be supervised—no easy task when it is proceeding in about a hundred and fifty villages at once. On completion it must be measured, and if it is unsuccessful a new attempt must be made.

Often wells are out of the question, or all attempts to find water fail. Holes must then be dug in any old tank or river-bed. But often rock is encountered, and then all that remains is to send the people for water to some neighbouring village. In order that some water-sources at least may remain, and that the populace may not be compelled to emigrate *en masse*, every stream in which the least flow can be detected has been already carefully dammed up, either by earthwork or, more generally, by a stout brick wall. There are also some natural water-holes in which, while a large body of water is preserved, the danger of contamination arises. If the neighbouring soil is fairly soft, this may be avoided by digging holes near the bank, into which the water may filter; if the people can be persuaded to use such *jhireas*, they are fairly safe. But if the stream flows on a rock bed, such filtration is impossible, and an artificial filter must be constructed in the water itself. This is done by building up in the stream two concentric circles of uncemented brick: the intervening space is filled with rubble, and a ramp of sand or gravel must be thrown up around it. When the water contained in this cistern has been baled out for some four days, the contents become clear and wholesome, the scum of the stagnant and often filthy water outside forming a deposit in the chinks of brick and rubble, which is itself one of the best of filters.

Another form of employment for the people is the digging

out of old tanks or 'water-pockets' for the use of cattle. Experience, however, has now shown that water thus laid bare over a large area rapidly evaporates; and, as the economising of the fluid is of the highest importance, it is thus more advisable, except in certain soils, to dig *jhireas*, or wells, and make the work of raising water for the cattle a form of continuous famine relief.

In this way provision is made for a starving and thirsty people. But, while Government undertakes to save life, it does not provide luxuries. The absence of a charitable relief fund in this year has robbed the operations of what was a principal feature and a heavy task in 1897. It is impossible to distribute clothes with any liberality. It will be impossible when the sowing time comes round to distribute gratuitous sums for the purchase of seed and plough bullocks.<sup>1</sup>

## VI.

Such are the main measures taken for the relief of the distress. A word about the officials who execute them, and their daily duties. Acting under the authority of the divisional Commissioner and the head of the Province, but responsible for the working of his own district, is the chief civil officer, called in these parts Deputy Commissioner. He is a member of the Civil Service, he supervises the entire organisation of relief, plans and directs the network of relief centres, controls the available funds, and is the prime factor in the success of the operations. Under him are several relief officers, generally, but not always, Europeans. They are drawn from various sources: the Civil Service, the Indian Staff Corps, the Police, or the Forest Departments. It is they who have to carry out the policy of the Deputy Commissioner, who remain in the outlying parts of the district supervising the operations, and who come most closely into contact with the phenomena of famine. A relief officer must see to every form of relief operations in his charge; for, though works managed by the Public Works or Forest Departments are not under his orders, he reports upon them to the Deputy Commissioner. This, however, is only a small portion of his duties, which lie mainly in the supervision of small works, kitchens, and village relief. Up with the dawn, the relief officer swallows a hasty morning meal, and leaves his tents to ride round a number of villages previously warned of his coming. In the hilly tracts it is often impossible

<sup>1</sup> This was written before the opening of the Mansion-House Fund.—H. S.

to use a horse, and the steep slopes and bare black rock must be attacked on foot. On the upland plain, though the country is thick with large pebbles, there are generally fair bridle-paths where one can ride fast. But village inspection takes a long time; and the servants, who follow on foot, carrying a bag of rupees, writing materials, and last, but not least, a basket of cold tiffin, generally come up before the work is half over. Perhaps one's arrival has to be arranged so as to hit off a village kitchen at feeding time. The numbers shown on the roll must be checked by the numbers actually present; classification must be inspected, for the amount of food given varies with the age of the child. The quality of the food must be examined, and the proper amount for a day's issue be calculated; the recent accounts must be gone through; and, finally, the stock of grain shown to be in hand must be measured—a laborious task. Then come complaints and difficulties. The kitchen manager wants more pay; the headman does not give efficient help; it is impossible to purchase condiments at the prescribed price; it is a time of famine: all men are starving and all things are dear. When the kitchen has been seen, then comes the village relief. The village register, written up in square-headed Hindi characters, must be read over, the recipients answering to their names. They must be questioned to ascertain if they are receiving the proper dole. Among the Gonds this is no easy matter; an intelligent Gond cannot generally count further than twenty: his idea of money is of the haziest. Absentees must be searched for in their houses. The items of the roll must be compared with the statement of receipts and expenditure. Then if any of those in receipt of relief appear to be fit for work, they must be shipped off to some work. Finally the new candidates for relief are brought forward—aged folk, children whose caste forbids them to eat in the kitchen, a leper gesticulating with fingerless hands. This often necessitates a good deal of inquiry, as the native of India, even if well off, has a wonderful knack of making himself appear broken down and decrepit. Now an old lady, arrayed in her least becoming toilette, comes forward, bent double, leaning on her staff. The whole village is assembled for the function, and all know her usually upright gait; but not a face changes, where an English community would be convulsed at the attempted fraud. Something arouses suspicion; you order her to walk upright; she straightens herself and moves off with an air of dignified disap-

pointment. But it does not do to be too hard ; it is so difficult (as I once heard it expressed) to know when a man is going to get thin. When the roll has been written up and the money paid down, there remains, perhaps, a village work to be seen. The gangs are checked, the work is measured, the accounts squared, and fresh funds provided to carry on the operations. Then we leave the village, attended by its elders, still mourning over their withered crops and asking for new measures of relief—the deepening of this well, the restoration of that tank. Their lamentations only end when we break into a gallop for the next village, where the same, or similar, business must be transacted. At midday comes tiffin under some shady tree, and then more villages. A trifling and finnikin sort of work it may seem, but famine relief, like life, is made up of trifles, but in itself is not a trifle. Then there is the office work, the transmission of orders in vernacular to the circle officers, who seldom understand English ; the correction and supervision of their work, the devising of fresh methods where those in use have proved faulty. Meanwhile our camels have carried tent and kit to the next halting-place. At last, weary and thirsty, we see the gleam of white canvas through the evening gloom, and hurry on to where baths and cooling drinks shall compensate for the labour and heat of the day. These are pleasant moments in camp existence, but they have their price, long isolation from European society ; day after day the same ceaseless drudgery, ever increasing in bulk and complication ; in summer the raging heat under the ineffectual shade of canvas ; after summer the tropical rains turning all the ways to mire, and making the luxury even of tents impossible.

As we enjoy the cool night air under the starlit sky, the thousand fires of some relief work twinkle out before us, or the smoke rises into the moonlight from a neighbouring hamlet. There is nothing to show that we are in a place of famine. Yet let vigilance be relaxed for a moment, and the villages would be deserted, the highways filled with hunger-stricken skeletons, and the hyena and the vulture would be wrangling over the unburied dead. The day of petty unheroic toil, preceded by many such, to be succeeded, alas ! by many more, has done its work, and in a land of dearth they have enough.

H. SHARP.

## ON FADS.

WITHOUT enthusiasm it will generally be admitted that the progress of the world would be slow, if it progressed at all. But our 'enthusiasm' becomes 'fanaticism' to those who do not share our ardour for any given cause. Therefore, the conclusion is forced upon us that fanaticism itself, or at least that which is liable to go by the name, is necessary for the purification of the world. There is even another word less dignified, less conciliatory, by which we must be content to hear our enthusiasm described, namely, 'fads.' Faddism, fanaticism, and enthusiasm, these three; and for the promotion of our own particular interests we would all claim to be inspired by the loftiest of the three—enthusiasm. And by what right shall any deny us our title to this claim? As its derivation teaches us, enthusiasm, rightly interpreted, means 'inspired of God.' And scoffers, or those who from a natural inclination, lightly and without sufficient grounds, invariably assume the prophet to be a false prophet, commit the one unpardonable sin. They may happen occasionally to be right, but this is not due to their insight and discrimination, but to the immutable law of averages, nor does it make their sin the less heinous. Nevertheless, it behoves all enthusiasts to take these mockers into account, and so to present their case as to give least offence, to rouse the least antagonism, and above all, in the manner best calculated to win over the wobblers.

Perhaps the enthusiasts who give most offence in the largest numbers, and from the highest pinnacle of self-righteousness, are the *Temperance Reformers*. The attitude of many is typified by the vehement exclamation of an earnest lady who has spent many of the best years of an admirable life in waging war against the drink traffic: 'It is the moderate drinker that I hate most, and who most retards our progress!' It reminds one of the languid lady who exclaims to her attendant, on hearing a ring at her bell, 'If that is the doctor, please say I am not well enough to see him!' How much more admirable is the attitude of that apostle of Temperance, Lady Henry Somerset, who admitted in her evidence before the Liquor Law Commission that if there were no excessive drinking there would be no need for any teetotal societies!

Perhaps, however, some of her colleagues resemble the old lady who, when manifesting too fierce a sabbatarian spirit, and being reminded by her minister of how the Founder of her faith plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath, said she 'thought none the better of Him for that.' There is, undoubtedly, a great tendency to set the cart before the horse in these matters, a failure to recognise the cause of intemperance, and too great a belief in the power of the law to remedy this overwhelming evil. Hence arises the repugnance certain reformers manifest towards that, to them, hateful and contemptible course—compromise. It would seem at times that in their eagerness to obtain the means of procuring a temperate community, they forget the ends they ostensibly have in view. This surely is the greater happiness of that vast bulk of their fellow human beings, whose hope of even glimpsing this beatific condition is likely to be irretrievably destroyed by the insidious monster Drink! But, until we can give the despairing slum worker something better than beer to quicken his pulses into a more generous if evanescent sympathy with his fellows, what right have we, even we well-fed well-clothed 'teetotallers,' to add to the burden of his not over-easy life by one hair's-breadth, either by putting difficulties in the way of his obtaining his harmless glass of beer, or by placing a stigma upon his avowal of the need for what is often, alas! the only solace of his joyless life? A solace described, from the luxurious plane he habitually occupies, by Mr. Anthony Hope as 'the hour's flouting of hard life that good wine brings'—a solace sorry enough, I admit, but facts should be faced and dealt with, not hidden and run away from. No! it must be confessed, with sorrow, that some fierce temperance advocates make one feel that it is not so much the hideous consequences of the abuse of alcohol that urge them on in their glorious fight: it seems almost as if the knowledge that there is a rosier brighter side to the stimulating vine-stream fills them with even more disgust, and that the thought of its convivial influence lashes them into an even greater fury of indignation against the genial Bacchus's many-sided gift.

Perhaps it was after experiencing the full torrent of these views from a certain host famous for his intemperate advocacy of temperance, that one of his guests, in bidding him a dejected farewell, exclaimed, 'Good-bye, my dear C., it is only by the grace of God that I do not leave this house an incorrigible drunkard.'

The safest and most useful field whereon to begin operations

for reform of any kind is not to wage war against the ingrained prejudices of old age, but to direct one's whole energies in manœuvring the plastic mind of youth; and the grandest and strongest weapon wherewith to combat all evil is *Education*.

But the problem as to how the children of conforming and nonconforming Christian, of Jewish and of freethinking ratepayers, are to receive adequate and luminous teaching, each according to their several lights, engenders much fierce ardour in the breasts of some public-spirited politicians. Mr. Adler deals ably with the subject in a little work on the 'Moral Instruction of Children.' After considering various plans whereby the endeavour would be made to satisfy sect as well as soul, and discarding them one by one as not meeting the demands of any one particular sect, and giving grave offence to the majority of the others, he sums up the case as follows: 'There is a body of moral truth upon which all good men of whatever sect or opinion are agreed; it is the business of public schools to deliver to their pupils this common fund of moral truth.' As to method, he suggests that 'the modern educational methods be applied to that stock of moral truths which all good men accept, and you will have the material for the moral lessons which are needed in a public school.' Moral teaching on this principle would receive far more attention and occupy much more time in the regular curriculum than it does at present, limited as it often is to 'scripture lessons' during the week and an hour or two in the Sunday school, and often regarded by the child as something apart from his other life. The moral teaching suggested as part of the weekly lessons would comprise definite instruction on the subject of 'Duty,' divided with excellent suggestiveness by Mr. Adler into three main provinces, the heads of each of which have here been again briefly and superficially subdivided.

I. Duty to self. (1) Physical. Those relating to the sustenance of the body in its highest state of physical perfection, involving the prohibition of suicide, and the perfecting of the organs; cleanliness, temperance, and chastity. (2) Intellectual. The necessity of acquiring knowledge, diligence, perseverance, and the cultivation of any special gifts. Under this head the æsthetic qualities would receive consideration. (3) Emotional. The control and purification of the feelings, the power of thought to affect habits, &c.

II. Duties to all mankind, justice, charity, &c.



III. Special social duties: conjugal, parental, filial; the relations between employer and employed, the duties of citizenship, and the duties of friendship.

Thus, it is argued, the 'whole field of duty' will be instilled into the mind of the child. If general and special truths relating to 'the whole duty of man' could be assimilated with the same degree of unquestioning certitude with which other truths, mathematical, scientific, or historical, are assimilated as non-debateable material, not liable to be disturbed by the fullest and freest subsequent search after truth, there would inevitably be an incalculable gain in moral force. For if these ethical considerations invariably governed our actions, the purpose of all 'religions' would be fulfilled. The effect would not be to swell the triumph of any special sect, but to increase the total sum of universal good. And is it aught but blasphemy to assert that this is not the Divine Purpose? It were surely to invest the Deity with the feeblest of human attributes to suppose that He requires personal public recognition of services which, from their very nature, it is obvious to all thinking persons He alone is able to render.

The practice of '*Ritualism*' in the Church of England is another subject akin to the above, in advocating or protesting against which enthusiasts on both sides justly incur the title of 'faddists.' It is, perhaps, difficult for an outsider—a nonconforming nonconformist—to appreciate the excitement and the bitterness aroused by this question: the supremacy or otherwise of the priesthood in its own sphere. But there can be no doubt that the ugly sordid side of the subject is more in evidence amongst the fierce sticklers for the 'rights' of the layman than amongst those who support the independence of the clergy. These at least recognise the necessity for freedom in interpreting and expressing spiritual ideas, a necessity felt in its utmost by the individual entrusted with the guidance of a large concourse of people dependent upon him for the administration of their souls' need. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that there is justice on the side of those who demand their pound of flesh and object to being crammed, against their will, with accompanying sauces that they find disagree with them, and which they are obliged to swallow or go without their accustomed fare. It is not so much, they will object, that they are given more than they have paid for, but that what they have paid for is given them in a form so disguised that they are unable to recognise it. And there is a great deal to be

said for those who regard the administration of their religion as a commercial concern. Often, unfortunately, no higher views are entertained of their mission by the administrators themselves. And until the Church is financially and legally free from the dominion of the State, it will be difficult to avoid the taint of this stultifying conception of a National Spiritual Sanatorium.

Upon a certain occasion, when endeavouring to impress an eminent divine with the imperative necessity of disestablishing the Church for its own stability and increased influence, I was met in reply with the objection that the first move of the Disestablished Church would be to evict from its fold all the independent-minded and enlightened members amongst the clergy. This view is not without its instructive points. It proclaims the scepticism entertained by the more intelligent clergymen as to the existence of a fair and open mind, coupled with a desire for enlightenment, amongst the bulk of the members lay and otherwise of the Established Church, and the consequent need they (the more enlightened) experience of the coercive support, as it were, of the State, to induce the unthinking mob to accept their teaching. But is the acceptance of spiritual truths capable of being enforced by Act of Parliament? Surely to believe this is to drag 'spiritual truth' down to the level of all mundane laws established self-protectively on the material plane.

Without going deeply into the questions which form the subjects of dispute between the 'Protestants' and the 'Ritualists,' we are entitled to glance at the names around which the battle waxes fiercest. Bishop Ryle offers a 'short catalogue' illustrating the chief channels wherein a 'systematic determination to unprotestantise' the services of the Church of England is manifested.

- (a) The substitution of the word 'mass' for the 'Lord's supper.'
- (b) The use of the word 'altar' for the 'Lord's table.'
- (c) Designating every 'clergyman' a 'priest,' or worse still a 'sacrificing priest.'

Now to the lukewarm lay mind there is nothing very terrible in these substitutes, and they appear to leave untouched the great questions of eternity and salvation. But perhaps Mr. S. Smith may be accepted as a fair exponent of Protestantism, and he put the case in the House of Commons on February 8, 1899, thus: 'We claim as citizens of this country that the great national settlement of the sixteenth century shall not be set aside by the lawless action of the clergy; and the feeling is rapidly growing

that if the State has no solution to offer, the State tie must be dissolved, and the contending parties left to fight out their differences in the arena of free discussion.' Now, so far from this appearing a contingency full of terrifying potentialities, to some people it appears a 'consummation devoutly to be wished.' It seems monstrous that religious aspirants of the twentieth century are to be bound by the conclusions arrived at in the sixteenth by a set of people suffering from the most blinding of all emotions—burning hatred for their co-religionists whose influence they were seeking to overthrow and supersede. And it seems a primitive species of morality that demands unqualified adherence to the letter of a contract entered into more than three hundred years ago, because that contract happens to be bound by that most sacred of all bonds, a monetary fund.

There are those who believe that the power of free discussion can be conducive to nothing but good, that whatever is of value as embodied in the teaching of the Church will endure in spite of freedom of thought and freedom of action, and that the 'Church' whose doctrines find an echo in the heart of every right-thinking man and woman is the true Church and the only one founded on the rock.

No doubt there are some who regard even so weighty a subject as *Woman's Suffrage* as a fad. And, although it seems wellnigh impossible to shriek too loudly over the palpable injustice of women's present thralldom, we should be saved from these blatant methods by the example of those who oppose women in this their spirited striving after self-help.

The fact is, that the case of the tax- and rate-paying woman who demands enfranchisement, stated temperately and accurately, is so unanswerable that no hysterics are needed. For, as Carlyle said of Free Trade, no argument has ever been heard against it 'that would not make an angel weep.' Indeed, it is singular that on this subject the accepted characteristics of the male and female appear to change places. The woman has the whole battery of reason on her side, the man relies on prehistoric prejudice. The manifestation of this prejudice takes various forms. Some people meet women's unanswerable demand for common justice, on the ground that taxation necessitates representation, by attempted ridicule, and play the buffoon. This is essentially the rôle Mr. Labouchere adopts more or less successfully. Others meet the demand courteously but negatively, with

all sorts of prettily flavoured testimonials as to the charm and usefulness of 'the fair sex,' which are very gratifying, but so unnecessary, for women never doubted the possession of either quality in themselves. Then there are those who deny women their 'rights' brutally and aggressively. One kind seems to say: 'Women are fools, and we are glad it is so, bless them!' the other kind equally say, 'Women are fools,' but add, 'we wish it were not so.' Nevertheless one can but sympathise and even experience a feeling akin to shame when one sees the lords of creation forced to descend from the lofty pedestal of hard logic, and ensconce themselves behind the shield allotted without question to woman by man as her lawful armoury of defence, namely, instinct or prejudice. Yet this is what we are forced to see—some of us with a delicate shrinking from the exposure of such weak spots in the much-prized and much-vaunted masculine brain. But, with rising hope and renewed faith, we gratefully contemplate the communities of Wyoming, New Zealand, West Australia, South Australia, Idaho, and Colorado, where after many a struggle the male population have reasserted the supremacy of their reasoning powers and Woman Suffrage has been established.

Perhaps the *Anti-vivisectionists* have the most difficulties to contend with in their righteous crusade against legalised cruelty perpetrated in the name of science, and ostensibly for the purpose of benefiting humanity. For not only have they enemies without the camp, but enemies within to contend against. The enemies from without accuse anti-vivisectionists of hysterical ignorance, and attribute to them a want of capacity to estimate correctly the incalculable service that is rendered to the human race through the experiments upon living animals, which experiments they assert, through their most eminent apostles, are carried on perfectly painlessly to animals, and that, therefore, they afford no justification for the attacks made upon the experimenters. Onslaughts from within come from those who, like the more ardent spirits amongst the temperance reformers, do not admit the word 'compromise' into their vocabulary, nor recognise its productive influence on the cause they have at heart. Their watchword is 'consistency,' and sooner than be found wanting by the smallest scruple in this superlative quality, they will forego their chance of advancing their cause by however appreciable a degree.

Amongst the moderate section, however, there are also to be

found people who overstate their case, or state it wrongly, neither of which is necessary if a cause be just and honourable. There are those who, on platforms for instance, glibly proclaim their willingness to sacrifice not themselves only, but some one dear to them (their favourite child for choice), in the cause of the tortured animal, or inconsequently maintain their potential inflexibility even should the glorious prospect of an unlimited extension of years be offered them at the price of a tortured animal's life. These appear to less heroic souls to give away their case by formulating hypotheses involving an admission of the usefulness of vivisection. The only reasonable and impregnable position for anti-vivisectionists to take up is the utter uselessness of vivisection. To defend oneself for one's energetic action with the plea of scientific ignorance, and to put on the inadequate armour of sentiment, is attempting too great a task against odds very much in favour of the vivisectionists; but the anti-vivisectionists have on their side weapons as potent as the physiologists, on the battlefield of reason. They possess an array of indisputable and undisputed facts, undisputed even by the physiologists themselves, wherewith to confront their enemies.

Take the simple fact, for instance, of the almost invariable difference between the organs of the human and other animals: the fact that most drugs act in a totally different manner upon the lower animals' organs and upon the same organs in human beings: the fact that great terror causes certain fundamental changes in the blood and juices of the body, thus rendering observation, when the animal is in the state that it invariably is in when being vivisected, useless as data whereon to rest knowledge as to how the drugs administered would affect even the same animal when in a normal condition. And recently a vivisector commented upon the impossibility of forming accurate opinions upon the action of the heart during vivisection, because the condition of the vivisected animal's heart was never normal. But the acquisition of this positive knowledge will not prevent other physiologists from making similar admittedly useless experiments. Thus the uncertain science of medicine can derive no exact knowledge as to the effect of any drug on the human organism from experiments upon animals, and as to surgery, which is an exact science, we find surgeons of such eminence as Mr. Lawson Tait and Mr. Treves publicly declaring that not only had vivisection not taught them anything that was

of use to them in their operations, but that they had to unlearn nearly all they thought they had learnt from experiments on animals when they came to operate upon human beings. As long as there are men of eminence in this profession who question the necessity for what, there is no doubt in the mind of all impartial people, involves hideous suffering to helpless and inoffensive dumb animals, have we any right to aid and abet others less conscientious and less scrupulous in inflicting tortures on any of God's creatures for the sake of some possible benefit we, as human beings, may eventually derive from their action?

Undoubtedly the same eternal laws operate in the physical as in the moral world, and if we are convinced that by violating the recognised laws of the moral universe evil ensues, it is impossible to suppose that physical good can be effected by cruelty and injustice to the weak or at the expense of the moral good. It seems clear to those who think thus that vivisection is not only wrong because it is useless, but useless because it is wrong; in other words, it is futile to expect any actions to yield results contrary to those which universal experience, embodied in all the accepted codes of philosophical and religious teaching, justifies us in regarding as the certain ultimate result, or the inevitable aggregate outcome, of a particular course of conduct.

Convictions based on unemotional lines are necessarily of a more stable nature than those governed entirely by the emotions. And before embarking upon any weighty enterprise, it is well to examine our opinions, before they become convictions, by the God-given light of Reason. We shall then be less likely to find discouragement ourselves, and, what is perhaps more important, less likely also to retard the cause we are endeavouring to advance.

AGNES GROVE.

# AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STEWARDSHIP.

WHEN the London papers announced that Raymond Fox, M.P. for Mid-Clare, had applied for the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds, other men in Parliament were not much surprised. His engagement had been very apparent, as his pretty fiancée, far from trying to allure him from his political duties to society frivolities, had herself developed an absorbing interest in politics, and was frequently to be seen dining in the House and having tea on the terrace, and even sitting through dull debates behind the *grille* of the ladies' gallery, with an aunt who would have infinitely preferred the opera. And this she did on the chance of hearing Raymond open his eloquent lips for five or ten minutes.

But, you may ask, if the lady was so sympathetic, why did his engagement entail his retirement from Parliament? Well, this was the way of it. Her father, though an Irishman and a supporter of the same political party, was yet eminently practical, and, having made his way in the world, desired to have as a son-in-law a man who could do the same. He had made it the sole condition of his consent to the engagement that Raymond should leave Parliament till he had put himself in a position of independence by exercise of his profession.

Raymond had been called to the Irish bar, but had never practised. He felt confident, however, that all would be plain sailing. He had attained a reputation as an orator and all-round clever fellow, was also a popular hero in a way, owing to a prominent part he had taken in an eviction affray in which the police came off second best. So there was first of all a private conference with the lady and then a confidential talk with his party Leader and the Whip, and it was unanimously decided that the retirement was to be sanctioned.

'When you are a rich man,' said the Whip, 'and have money to waste on an election contest, never doubt but we'll find a seat you can fight for us. I suppose Mid-Clare is safe for our party?'

Raymond assured them that Mid-Clare was safe, and promised to go down and back their candidate. 'I'll be of some use to him with the "hillside men,"' he added with a meaning smile.



'I flatter myself I have some influence in that quarter.' So they shook hands with him in congratulation, and he went off elated, to consult with Molly and Molly's father as to the prospects of a speedy wedding.

Thus was it that the paragraph about the Chiltern Hundreds came into the papers. It created no great stir in London, and in fact appeared in a very backward corner of the papers, but copied into a more prominent position in the Dublin and Irish provincial press, it produced, as you shall hear, a ruction such as the party never dreamed of on the day when the Leader and the Whip decided that Fox might safely go, and that the seat was safe for Moriarty.

. . . . .

Now be it known to you that Raymond Fox owed that seat solely and simply to the favour of the 'hillside men.'

This section of the constituency, though disavowing all parliamentary agitation in favour of stronger measures, found themselves in a position of delightful supremacy.

By holding aloof and talking haughtily, as if the ballot-box were beneath notice, and saying they disdained to vote at all, they found themselves courted on all sides and talked at in eloquent style by the rival candidates and their backers. There was some pretty tall talk at that Mid-Clare election, I can tell you, and a good deal of it was never reported in the papers; but Raymond Fox won easily. Phil Foy, a veteran who had come through the '48 and '67 troubles, announced it as his conviction that the young man would go to the scaffold for his country. That clinched the matter.

There were two or three objectors, but old Phil carried all objection down. The word was given in the right quarter and Raymond headed the poll. It was on Phil's support that he was reckoning when he promised to go down and back Moriarty at the bye-election.

. . . . .

One of these days the following scene was enacted at the door of a roadside village in the county Clare. The cottage was the residence of Phil Foy, and he leaned over the half-door smoking contentedly, till a strapping young fellow came up from the town and disturbed his serenity by wildly waving a newspaper as he approached.

'What's on the paper, Denny?' he shouted in a hearty voice. 'Spake up, man, an' tell us—is it a furrin' war?' Phil was always on the outlook for a 'furrin' war'; there had come none to answer his expectation in all his long lifetime. The Crimean one was a deadly disappointment that he had hardly recovered from yet.

'No chance of a war at all, Phil,' shouted Denny, 'but here's something that will astonish you more than if there was.'

'What then? Don't be keepin' it off me. What is it at all, at all?'

'This,' said Denny, with a grin; 'Misther Raymond Fox, that ye had us all to vote for, and what's more get our skulls cracked for, he has resigned his sate, that's all.'

'Hoorah!' said old Phil exultantly, 'the boy was too good for them. He belongs to us by rights.'

'Hould on till ye hear all,' said Denny, and he shook his head ominously; 'ye were too confidin' and aisily taken in, Phil. Hear to this.' Running his finger down the column he found the place and read aloud:

"The London papers announce the resignation of the member for Mid-Clare. Mr. Raymond Fox has applied to the Speaker for the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds."

'A Government office,' said Phil in an ominous voice. "'Tis a lie. I'll never believe it.'

''Tis worse than Sadleir and Keogh,' went on Denny. 'They were sought after and had temptation put in their way, but he's been runnin' after a job himself. He applied for the post, they say, aye, and begorra he has got what he asked,' and he read again from the London correspondent's letter:

"The Speaker has granted the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds to Mr. Raymond Fox."

Phil struck the door a mighty blow and shivered his pipe to pieces. "'Tis a lie, I say, an invintion av the London papers; I'll wait till I hear it from his own lips.'

'Well, you'll not have long to wait,' went on Denny, 'for he's comin' to the town beyant on Wednesday week. The committee's sittin' now to arrange things, an' the bands is to be out an' torch-lights all as usual just as if he hadn't disgraced the county Clare. Moreover, here's a letter for yourself, Phil, with the London mark. Maybe there's news in it.'

Phil rent the envelope asunder and read the contents. He saw the bold signature 'Raymond Fox,' and read these words over

it: 'I hope to stand among the boys of Clare on Wednesday next and to give them an account of my stewardship. The cause of my resigning at this juncture is one on account of which my friends will have reason to congratulate me, and I hope that you, Phil, may be among the foremost to take my hand and wish me good-luck in my new sphere of life.'

Slowly the old man read it to himself; tears were gathering in his eyes. Suddenly they flashed fire. "An account of his stewardship" is it, then, he is for giving us, and asking us to wish him luck? I'll teach him the mettle that is in the boys of Clare. Wednesday week is it? Aye! Well, Phil Foy will be there.'

. . . . .

Raymond entered the town in a wagonette and pair, a brass band playing before him and torch-bearers in ranks around. He stood bareheaded and elate, waving his hat, and proud to show Moriarty, the new man, how popular he was. 'But wait,' he whispered in confidence, 'wait till you see the reception I'll get from "the boys" when I speak to-night. I know how to gain their hearts, and what's more, their vote. I don't mind giving you the straight tip—*when in doubt quote John Mitchel*. I have a couple of fine passages off to quote to-night; just wait till you hear how they'll cheer.'

The hall was reached. It was packed to suffocation, and outside in the street all the youngsters of the town assembled to stand in the mud and rain, and echo the acclamations that would come through the open windows.

Raymond struggled up the hall to the platform with difficulty. He had to shake hands right and left. He had, moreover, to try to remember everybody's names. It was somewhat confusing, but he bore it well. There were some, however, whom he remembered but did not see. Where was Phil Foy? Where were these sturdy battalions who, with swinging shillelaghs at a time of stress, had cleared the Market Square of his opponents, proving that 'physical force' doctrines were with them not merely theoretical?

His brow cleared when at length he gained the platform and faced the hall. There was the veteran Phil, well to the back, with his stalwarts around him some six rows deep. Phil leaned on the top of his blackthorn. Every man carried one.

'Aha! I see,' thought Raymond; 'an assault is feared; they're guarding the entrance.' He waved his hand airily in the direction

of Phil, but concluded the old man did not see him, for there was no response.

They were singularly undemonstrative to-night, those 'hill-siders.' Maybe they were sad at losing their chosen one.

Could he have heard what they were discussing in undertones, he would have understood their grimness. 'Tis a group of islands somewhere out in the East he's made governor of,' said one. 'I don't rightly know where they are, but 'tis a fine salary he will be getting!'

'Now little you know about it,' said another; 'tis just a big estate he's made agent for. Steward's the English for a land-agent. Bad luck to all av thim.'

Anyhow they all shook their heads and prophesied that he might end on the bench, for he was a lawyer, and would be looking to be made a judge, and coming round no doubt to the Ennis assizes and hanging some of his old friends.

The chairman rose and spoke, and when he had finished Phil's party uttered portentous groans. Half the audience joined in this demonstration, jumping to the conclusion that some one had discovered a dark blot on the poor man's political character. He had hitherto been one of the most respected and upright Nationalists, familiarly known as 'Honest John Cuddihy.' That made matters worse if he had gone wrong now.

Even Raymond and Moriarty looked on him coldly, though he had spoken flatteringly of them both. 'Too bad,' they thought, 'to saddle us with an unpopular chairman.' But now the retiring member, believing he would soon be all right, sprang to his feet in an alert and graceful manner, and flinging out his right arm struck an attitude suitable for the opening of his great oration.

'Men of the Banner County,' he said in thrilling musical tones, then paused for the usual applause.

I must explain to the unsophisticated Sassenach that, like Homer's heroes, most Irish towns and counties have their appropriate epithets, which no election speaker should be ignorant of. There is 'rebel' Cork, 'gallant' Tipperary, Limerick of the 'violated treaty,' the 'urbs intacta' which is Waterford, and Galway the 'City of the Tribes.'

Well, not to digress, Clare is the Banner County, and when Raymond Fox held up his right hand in that melodramatic fashion, he was meaning to suggest that, figuratively speaking, he was upholding the county's banner. There was little applause.

'Men of the Banner County,' he repeated. Then in a tone of thunder that made him collapse came a voice from the back of the hall.

'Boys av Clare!'

He suddenly was aware that Phil Foy was standing erect and defiant, pointing at him with derisive finger. The audience by now had their backs to the platform, and were struggling for a glimpse of this new orator. Raymond Fox could not proceed when nobody was looking at him. He folded his arms firmly and said in a calm tone, 'I beg a hearing for my good friend, Phil Foy. He has no doubt some news of importance.'

'Ye need beg nothing for me, young man,' said Phil. 'Keep all yer beggary for the British Government. I can speak to the boys av Clare without yer favour, Mr. Raymond Fox.'

A shout of approbation went up. 'Bravo, Phil! Go on, Phil! Right ye are! Ye were heard in the County Clare before he was cradled.'

Half of them had not the slightest idea as to what was up, but assumed that anyhow Phil was right. As a man who had been in gaol for Ireland, his opinion was taken as a rule on trust.

A thrill of unholy joy went round the room, and they cheered him lustily. Was he not providing excitement enough to keep the town going for seven years? He had cast a slur upon the respectable Mr. Cuddihy—'honest John'; he was denouncing young Fox, whom he had himself made member. 'Three cheers for Phil,' they shouted; 'go on, Phil!' They wanted to hear more.

The youngsters outside took up the applause with shrill hurrahs, and, to add insult to injury, the big drum, which was outside with the band, was banged frantically; the same drum which had erewhile headed Raymond's triumphal entry to the tune of Brian Borou's march.

'Boys of Clare,' went on Phil when the tumult quieted, 'in presence of you, one and all, I have to ask Mr. Raymond Fox whether there is any truth in the announcement that he has accepted British gold and taken an office under the Government.'

A howl of execration went up. They believed it already. Raymond stood as one thunderstruck, then laughed carelessly.

'Certainly not. I retire from Parliament to devote myself to practice at the bar. I would ask my old friend Phil Foy the grounds he has for this monstrous accusation.'

'Tis in all the London papers. 'Tis copied in the Dublin weeklies. I have it in black and white, and your own letter moreover, young man, saying how you'd come and tell us how you got the stewardship.'

Raymond passed his hand over his forehead in a dazed way. The outlook was threatening, many of the audience were shaking their shillelaghs at him in a suggestive fashion. Moriarty, who was a bit of a wag, was cruel enough to whisper:

'Are these the "boys" you spoke of influencing on my behalf?' and then smilingly, 'try them with John Mitchel, quick, for mercy's sake, or 'tis murdered we'll all be!'

'Hush!' said Raymond testily, and then he faced the crowd. 'I await,' he said, 'the reading of these extraordinary allegations, which as far as I can judge must be the figment of a disordered imagination.'

His manner was haughty in the extreme; unconsciously he fell into an English accent, which quite unwillingly he had contracted at St. Stephen's. The audience resented both the English accent and the hauteur of his manner.

'Listen to the English hum haws of him! Where did ye lave yer good old Irish brogue? 'Tis crazy he says Phil is! Send him back to where he came from.' Such were the exclamations that he heard ring out above the uproar.

Suddenly Phil Foy held up in his hand a newspaper and a letter, and he signalled for silence. Instantly all was still. You could have heard a mouse squeak.

All leaned attentively to hear, and Phil, holding the document to the glare of a lamp, read as follows:

"Our London Correspondent states on good authority that Mr. Raymond Fox has been appointed to the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. A vacancy is thus created in Mid Clare."

'Listen to that now,' growled a big giant of a fellow who stood at Phil's right hand, and then, shaking his stick at the platform, 'beggora, young man, there'll be a vacancy where you're standin' in a minute or two.'

Phil waved his hand at his too militant supporters and assumed a calmly judicial manner.

'The vilest criminal,' he said, 'is not condemned without a hearing. Hould yer tongues all av ye. Misther Raymond Fox, now is yer time to spake out an' clear yer character.' But Phil's dignity was utterly upset by the sudden convulsion that shook

the platform, a storm of laughter that was like a thunderstorm and earthquake combined.

'The Chiltern Hundreds, by Jove!' laughed Moriarty. 'Fox, my boy, hurry up and explain the business, or we're lost men. The vilest criminal—did you hear that? Why they're harder on you than the Primrose League.'

But Raymond could hardly find words to explain—he hesitated and stammered.

'Spake up,' shouted old Phil, stung beyond endurance. 'This is no laughin' matter. Are the words on this paper true or are they not?'

Raymond collected himself. 'Give me leave to explain. The statement, as I shall show you, is verbally true, but my good friend is ignorant of the formalities of Parliamentary procedure.'

'An' proud I am,' shouted Phil. 'Boys, he gives in to it! Away wid him an' the loikes av him.'

The mirth on the platform was checked by a sudden scuffling sound from the bottom of the hall—the noise made by close-crowded, heavy-booted men who were finding their feet and their sticks.

Raymond turned pale as death, plucky and all as he was. Moriarty ceased his chuckling. 'We're lost men,' he murmured; 'they'll break every bone in our bodies.'

There was a rush for the platform, and the Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds stood there facing the tumult. He had nothing to hope for, now, but that they'd find out their mistake after he was dead and done for, and give him a place among the martyrs. The newest form of dying for one's country this would be, to be killed by mistake in an election riot by one's own friends.

But it turned out that John Cuddihy had done a wise thing. He had brought in his pocket the key of a door at the back of the platform, thinking that though they brought the hero of the day up the hall at arrival to receive the handshakes of his admirers, they might wish to depart with less obstruction.

So as Raymond stood there with his arms folded and his eyes flashing, ready for martyrdom and thinking of Molly, he felt his coat-tails seized from behind, and before he knew where he was he was swung around and propelled almost headlong down the stair. The door was clapped to behind the fugitives, and the clatter of sticks that came on it in a minute or two made them glad to be on the safe side of it.



'To the station,' said Mr. Cuddihy to the driver of the wagonette. 'Drive like the devil an' you'll catch the half-eight train. Never mind the music!' (this to the band-master, who was mustering his musicians). 'Good-bye, gentlemen! I must go and lock them in, or they'll be after you.'

Thus their lives were saved, but Raymond's reputation was beyond salvation. Of course the business was explained and cleared up and understood by most people, and by them treated as a joke. But it is not a good thing to be the butt of a joke, if you want to be taken seriously and aim at being an M.P. And then away up the country there were people who never listened to the explanation. They were told that Raymond Fox was not in receipt of a Government salary, and that his stewardship was only a matter of form, and that he wasn't in the position beyond a week.

'Well now,' they would say with a twinkle in their eyes. 'An' so he gev up the job, did he? after the bother he had gettin' it. It tuk Phil Foy and the boys to strike terror in his sowl.'

Raymond is happily married to Molly and a success at the bar; but I need hardly tell you that he does not go on the Munster circuit, and if ever again he contests a seat it will be one at a reasonable distance from the county Clare.

ALICE L. MILLIGAN.

*MR. BLACKMORE.*

I KNEW Mr. Blackmore intimately during the last ten years of his life, and to know him in that sense was to love him. Genius apart, he was a delightful man—perhaps all the more so because he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve. His outlook on life was singularly independent, his speech was kindly, picturesque, and shrewd. His gift of humour flashed forth on the least provocation, and played around almost every subject which arose in the give-and-take of after-dinner talk. He was an uncompromising Conservative in the social even more than in the political sense, and had no patience with authors who inspire paragraphs about themselves, or pose before the camera in their own libraries. Once, so he told me, a writer of the flamboyant modern school expressed, through a fair lady in whom Blackmore took an interest, a wish to meet him. He knew the man and did not relish the proposed encounter, and so he assured me with a twinkle in his eye that he wrote back to say that he was afraid that the pleasure would not be mutual. He laughed gaily at his own merciful deliverance from the spread-eagle bore. If there was one thing he detested more than another, it was the penalty of his own fame. He used to lament in comical fashion that he had been hounded out of the lovely strip of coast where Devon and Somerset meet by the holiday crowd who wanted to do personal homage to the author of 'Lorna Doone.' He loved peace and quietude beyond all else, as became a shy, proud, scholarly man, who was perfectly aware in a quiet way that he was a great master of romance, without the cheap though well-meant assurances of every passer-by to that effect.

A great deal of nonsense has been written within the last few weeks in almost every journal in England about Mr. Blackmore's 'solid prosperity' as a market gardener. He would have smiled grimly at such comments. He loved nature with whole-hearted devotion, and his fourteen acres at Teddington, where he cultivated grapes, pears, and strawberries—and at one time camellias and other exotics—were his playground. He lived in that garden, and latterly never went beyond it, except on Sundays on his way to church. He had a cordial dislike of London, and to my

knowledge had not been in it during the last four years even for a day. He was fond of specimen trees, and would import them from almost every part of Europe. He gloried in his pears and apples, and when one dined with him he used to wax eloquent over the dessert in recommending this fruit or that as choice and rare. But it is absurd to say that he gardened to profit. On the contrary, he told me, and somewhat ruefully, that he had had to pay dearly for his hobby, and that as a matter of fact his cultivation of fruit represented on an average 250*l.* a year out of pocket. I remember sitting with him one windy afternoon in October, when our conversation—half picnic of fancy, half sacrament of soul—was interrupted by the servant-maid, who said that the chief man about the garden wanted to see him at once. Blackmore lifted his eyebrows, knocked the ashes out of his long churchwarden pipe, rose reluctantly, apologised, and disappeared. When he came back, after an interval of twenty minutes, it was to say that the gale had blown down ten yards of his high fence, and that the Philistines were upon him in the shape of the urchins of Teddington, who at length had found their way into his jealously guarded orchard. His half-pathetic amusement at their boisterous glee as they chased one another over his preserves was irresistible, and, to do him credit, he joined heartily in the laugh. Next to the pruning of his vines and the care of his pear trees, chess was his chief diversion, and his pipe his unfailing solace. He loved dogs, and I believe I am correct in saying that he called the house which he built at Teddington after a favourite hound. In earlier years he handled a gun adroitly, and far on in life a rod, for he was an enthusiastic angler.

His closing years were spent in strict seclusion. He led the intellectual life, sat lightly on the verdict of the crowd, minded his own business, and cultivated horticulture and the philosophic mood. Although his fame was world-wide, he was not known even by sight to the majority of the worthy inhabitants of Teddington, and as years went on he more and more hugged his own seclusion, much to the chagrin of Villadom. A ring at his bell would send him into his garden by the back door. 'Well, but if they must see you,' was often the parting shot. His reply was characteristic: 'If it is a man, send him out to me; but if it is a lady, I will come to her.' When I was writing the *Life of Lord John Russell*, I was much at Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park. Once, I asked the widow of that famous statesman—herself

a woman of keen intellectual culture and catholic sympathies—whether she knew Mr. Blackmore. She said 'No,' and launched immediately into the praise of his books. When I told her he had lived for nearly thirty years only a few miles away from her own home, she was startled, and begged me to bring him to see her. But Mr. Blackmore, though pleased at the proposal, was even then somewhat shaky on his legs, and so the project was abandoned. George Macdonald once said to me, 'I always wanted to know that man,' and I know of a certainty that Blackmore also wanted to know him; but, alas, they never met, and for a similar reason. His appreciation of Mr. Hardy, especially in the personal sense, was marked, and I know that it was a matter of regret that Dorchester was so far from Teddington. Blackmore was by no means easy of access, a circumstance that was due in part to his own proud shyness. Few great writers were more kind, however, to younger men, especially novelists, and I could give instances of this, but to do so would be to violate the confidences of intimate unguarded talk.

I have a big bundle of Mr. Blackmore's letters written during the last eight years. They are brief notes for the most part, indited in that violet ink of which he was so fond. Thereby hangs a tale. I once was staying in a sleepy little town, remote from London. Blackmore knew it well, in fact he had sent me thither. Years before, he had purchased at a funny little shop in that quaint seaside town his first bottle of this magic ink. He begged me to get him some more from the same place, as he had hunted up and down London in vain for it. I did so, and to the amusement of us both it proved to be manufactured in Kentish Town. He laid in a stock with much of the gusto which other men show in laying in some choice brand of champagne; and when I last asked him if the ink had not run dry, he said, 'No, and it promises to outlast my pen.' The novel of his own which he most liked was not 'Lorna Doone,' but 'The Maid of Sker,' and after that 'Springhaven' and 'Alice Lorraine.' He used to smile with a touch of quiet disdain at the oracular young gentlemen in the press, who went into ecstasies over 'Lorna Doone,' and proceeded to run down everything else he wrote, or at best to damn his subsequent achievements with faint praise. He was perfectly aware that he had made a reputation that would last, and in his own quiet modest way he possessed his soul in patience. Once when there was talk of a lavishly illustrated edition of one

of his stories, he said to me, 'I am not very anxious to be illustrated; for I never yet saw any illustrations of my own work that did not kindle my wrath. They were better than my work, I dare say; but then they were not a bit like it, conveying in no way what I meant either in character or scenery.' He used to denounce what he called the stupid system, which prevents 'author and artist from putting their heads together' in the interests of common interpretation. I was surprised when he added, 'I have never yet set eyes'—this was in 1894—'on one of the many gentlemen who have done me the honour of putting their ideas as mine.'

Many of his laconic notes give a picture with almost a stroke of the pen. Writing in an evil month of May, seven years ago, when the east winds blew persistently, he says: 'We can get no rain. All crops must fail with another month of this fearful drought. Already the pears fall like hailstones.' Then a few weeks later: 'Goodness knows I have not much to grin at in these evil days, when we cannot even get a drop of dew, and strawberries are down to twopence halfpenny a pound.' Then in another mood and under other conditions of sky and soil: 'What a lovely change! All the bulbs look up again, and soon the hepaticas will bead the earth.' Once again, and this time in a rough winter: 'For nearly a month I have been undergoing bronchial troubles, which make me a plague to everybody, self included. Scarcely can I see to write in this bottle-green darkness—London XXX bottled in a chimney-pot.' But for the most part the letters touch too closely his affairs or mine, or else refer to the matter of the moment, to justify escape into print. Almost the last time I saw him he was telling me, in his own direct picturesque way, that to him now wearisome days and nights were appointed. He said that he often sat half the night with a book over the fire in despair of sleep. I asked him what kind of book had power of solace, and I was not surprised to find that the old fastidious scholar was living in fancy in the world's youth, as became a man who in boyhood had seen the glory of life in the enchanted pages of Homer. To the last he knew the secret of eternal youth, and was never a pessimist, either in regard to himself or the world. His closing letters to me cannot be quoted, though they dwell with manly fortitude on the great change which he knew as inevitable. The last of them—it was written this year, indeed only a few weeks ago—was of the nature of a solemn tender farewell.

STUART J. REID.

## ATHLETICS AND HEALTH.

[Much astonishment has been caused by the rejection of several prominent Volunteer athletes on the score of constitutional unfitness. Inquiries of the medical authorities have elicited the fact that most of the rejections were prompted by minor and unessential deficiencies. Here an attempt has been made to discuss the wider question of the general effect of different branches of athletics on the health of the body.]

THAT the English are an athletic race may be granted. The contrary has no doubt been very ably maintained, but rather as a thesis than a serious truth. Of course of the 70,000 odd people who go to view the final of a professional cup tie, a majority perhaps can take only a 'paper' interest in the game, and twenty-two athletes are a small proportion out of, say, 30,000 academic spectators. We are not gladiatorial because we love to watch the doings of gladiators. Just as the Germans say of us that we are music-lovers but not music-makers, so in athletics our great interest may entail no corresponding capacity. Still, intense interest goes for something. The crowds do not only assemble to see a foreign fight and to lay wagers on the result, but partly at least because they individually have run or kicked or bicycled themselves into a share of the athletic spirit.

When we turn from the lower and middle to the upper classes, the athleticism of the race is not open even to academic denial. An American writer, who not long since published 'A Sporting Pilgrimage through England,' was struck by nothing more than the universality of athletics at the University. It seemed to him that every man he met did something athletic for his college. He was not deceived. To look, for instance, at a small college like Corpus Christi, Oxford. It consists of about fifty members, but supports a football fifteen and a football eleven, a cricket eleven, and an eight and a torpid, perhaps two. The sum of these teams amounts to fifty-five. Of course very many members have double functions; but if you add to these games the 'fancy pastimes,' such as lawn tennis and hockey, and a detached game like athletics proper, the number of unathletic men will scarcely reach double figures. In one way the college we have instanced is not an example particularly favourable to our immediate point, as it is essentially a reading college, an institution where every

one must perforce read for an honour school. It will, however, on that account the better serve to illustrate a later step of the argument.

We are then athletic. From school till the end of the University career athletics fill half our time and more than half our thoughts. The Master of Pembroke, in a late speech, lamented that the undergraduate very much disliked being bumped, but was quite happy at being ploughed. It is certain that every college in its corporate capacity does very much dislike being bumped; it has a very strong athletic interest, but it remains to be proved whether this enthusiasm for sports acts for good or ill on the mind, morals, and health of the community. The influence of athletics is immense. In many cases mere games provide the chief factor to that which guides brain, character, and body to its ultimate development, and therefore it is categorically imperative to answer the question: Do we think, act, and move better or worse for our fights on path and field and river?

If we 'take the high *priori* road,' it is possible to go on talking for any length of time without making much advance. There is a sort of orthodox, stereotyped, sermonised form of argument from the trammels of which athletic writers and speakers generally fail to escape. From the very accent of the exordium a dread foreboding falls on the listener that 'the playing fields of Eton' and '*mens sana in corpore sano*' will once again be doing duty before the speech is many minutes older. Now the playing fields of Eton (though a trifle dark for out-fielding) are an excellent institution, and no one objects to a healthy mind in a healthy body. But poetic sayings and Latin citations do not help us to know whether the sound body really is acquired on the said arena. There are people of by no means grandmotherly upbringing or unmasculine instincts who regard the progress of athleticism with dread, and, using Greece as their historical parallel, consider the exaggerated reverence for games as one of the many signs of a growing decadence. On both sides the arguments have been as a rule too much 'in the air'; the subject is in need of scientific investigation; it requires an accurate knowledge of physiological truths, an insight into the springs of moral action, and an accumulated body of statistical facts gathered from practical athletes.

Some attempt is here made to descend from the air; but the



subject is such a wide one, that in the present article there will be only room for the discussion of one branch. The writer has by him some statistics showing the proficiency of athletes in the schools, from which may be extracted the influence of athletics in the intellectual sphere, and also a list of the after careers of University athletes, which will give some line as to the moral effect of athletics, but these mental and moral considerations must be here omitted to give room for the inquiry into the relation of athletics and bodily health.

There occur from time to time, as there must occur, premature deaths in the ranks of prominent athletes. Sometimes the suddenness of the death, or the sadness of contrast between the strength and the ease of its overthrow, finds a universal pity, which with sentimental suddenness presumes that athletics are the cause of the loss and therefore meet to be abolished. It was public opinion so expressed that as long ago as 1869 prompted Dr. Morgan of Manchester to collect a famous list of statistics of University oarsmen. His skill and perseverance in collecting and tabulating information were extraordinary, and his published book made an immense sensation, especially in America, where some attempts—never, however, successfully carried out—were made to imitate Dr. Morgan's system among 'prize-fighters and other branches of athletics!' Statistics, of course, like all isolated groups of facts, may tell gross lies. Unrelated details, when taken from their isolation to illustrate any definite subject, are necessarily vitiated by the mere change of position. For instance, teetotalers may live less long than wine-bibbers, but apply this fact to the solution of the question of the relative wholesomeness of water and wine, and a host of incidental accompaniments will soon deprive your statistical facts of half their value. Dr. Morgan's results are liable to the same sort of vitiation, but they are very suggestive and very exhaustive. Their results are here summarised partly because they have fallen into oblivion, but chiefly in order to see how far his tables of facts fit in with facts of physiology more recently ascertained.

Out of 255 University eightsmen who were alive in 1869 Dr. Morgan heard from 251, and of those that died before that date he collected full accounts from their friends. The result of the inquiries 'panned out' in this way. Out of a total of 294, only seventeen said that the exercise had done them harm. And even of these seventeen the bulk had rowed the race at a time when

their health was in a hazardous state. Again, applying the test of longevity, Dr. Morgan found that taking the tables of a Life Insurance Company as his criterion, the added lives of the eight men in one of the earliest crews totalled fifty years in excess of the average life. The figures are striking, but the truth of their conclusions is damaged by the fact that a University oar is a picked man, a man whose physique would warrant the prophecy of a long life. The statistics have only proved that rowing has not harmed exceptional men sufficiently to bring them to the level of ordinary men. Statistics, however, if not conclusive argument, resemble analogy in showing that argument exists. If Dr. Morgan did not prove that hard rowing is beneficial to health, he left at least this substratum of fact: that so long as his exercise does not exceed that involved in training for and competing in the twenty minutes' row from Putney to Mortlake, a man of good physique need not fear to undertake the strain. The letters of the 251 men prove that much, at any rate. Under present conditions the risk is even less than it used to be, as every rower is subjected to a rigorous medical investigation. His heart is tested, and he must be able to expand his chest  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches by inhalation before his lungs are passed as fit.

In this book Dr. Morgan took an entirely empiric line. His statistics are indeed the most valuable that have ever been collected in the domain of the subject; but it is necessary to study them in connection with established truths of physiology. Does the collected testimony of individuals, very valuable no doubt in itself, but by no means final, coincide with the conclusions extracted from the proven effect of violent muscular exertion on the internal organs? In general the world's knowledge of the body is only skin-deep. 'Liver, lungs, and lights' are a closed book. In popular estimation the body of a man is regarded as consisting of two independent parts: a case and an 'inside.' The athlete therefore, it is held, has two objects before him: one to harden the case or muscular integument by violent exercise, the other to shove the right sort of food into 'the inside.' There is not much fault to be found with his theory as far as it goes, but it neglects this most essential fact: that the exercise which develops the muscles of the case acts with more effect even than food also on some of the internal organs. To take the heart as an instance. A man without physiological experience will hardly believe how much this organ, which is

composed of muscular tissue, is affected by the recurrence of exceptional exertion. A pedestrian or a rower at the end of a course of training possesses a heart and lungs that have become not less highly developed than the muscles of his calf. But there is this difference: the enlargement or increase of the leg muscles is of no particular matter apart from athletic pursuits, while any minishment of the strength of heart and lungs may exercise most disastrous effects on general health. This may be accepted without a display of technical terms from physiology, which, however, it will be as well to indicate shortly.

The technical information is supplied by Dr. Collier, who, himself an athlete, has for several years looked after the health of the Oxford University Athletic Club. Without reference to the arbitrament of such scientific truths as he supplies, statistics and the deductions from them are certain to lead to fallacious conclusions. 'The heart,' writes Dr. Collier (in a letter), is 'an organ composed almost entirely of muscular tissue, and just as the muscles of our arms and legs increase in size and strength, so the muscle-walls of the heart increase in thickness and power with the stimulus of exercise. This development of heart muscle may or may not be an advantage to the individual; to the man who starts with a feeble heart or a weak circulation it is an unmixed blessing; to the man who is constantly engaged in severe athletic struggles it may become a source of danger. The heart pumps the blood directly into its main blood-vessel the aorta, the walls of which are largely made up of elastic tissue. With each beat of the heart a column of blood is thrown forcibly against these elastic walls, and the danger is lest the powerful heart of the athlete, constantly working at high pressure, should over-distend them, leading to a loss of their elasticity and a permanently dilated condition, which in turn acts disastrously on the heart itself.'

Here, then, are the physiological facts, matters not for discussion, but posited with scientific stability. But facts are simpler things than deductions from facts. In spite of an odd politician, or one or two 'mere dons,' the world will agree that moderate exercise taken regularly is promotive of good health. Lord Palmerston was better for his riding to hounds, and Mr. Gladstone's longevity was assisted by the use of the axe. But in the present discussion of the athletic problem attention is rather directed to the more violent exercises of rowers, athletes, cyclists,

and players of football. Are the army of 'Blues' more or less robust and long-lived than their fellows?

The difficulty is especially hard to solve, as 'the effects of excessive muscular exertion are not generally felt till middle age is past,' a fact on which the opponents of athletics have laid especial emphasis, and thus appear, apart from statistics, to have made their position incontestable. They make the one or two cases of premature death, actually or inferentially attributed to excessive exertion, into a text, and when it is pointed out that these instances of theirs are as one to a thousand in relation to those benefited by athletics, they crush the cloud of witnesses by the argument that the alleged ill results will remain hidden till after middle age. Now Dr. Morgan's tables supply a direct and almost conclusive disproof of this style of argument, if we may presume that the two organs, the heart and lungs, are the most apt to suffer from great indulgence in athletics. According to the issued reports of the Registrar-General, of men who die between the ages of twenty and sixty, as large a number as 46 per cent. succumb to diseases of the heart and lungs. In striking contrast to this proportion, Dr. Morgan's inquiries produced the satisfactory result that in the case of old oarsmen only 30 per cent. of the deaths were attributable to diseases of these two organs. This is very satisfactory to the lover of athletics, but the medal has a reverse. Violent muscular exertion beyond any doubt *does* produce heart disease. There are certain classes of labourers, especially those whose perpetual occupation is carrying heavy sacks, among whom diseases resulting from 'gradual dilatation of the aorta' are exceedingly common. The same holds in the case of hammerers and forgers. But with these people also the approach of the malady is very slow, and seldom apparent till after the age of forty. To give another instance, great numbers of animals die of heart disease. With regard to horses, it has been observed that those whose task it is to start weights requiring a jerk to put them in motion die suddenly, and certainly after a few years, while those which have found it possible to initiate movement by leaning on the traces rarely appear to suffer ill effects. Pulling wood, for instance, or starting an omnibus on a stone road may kill a horse, which would thrive if its business was to pull railway trucks or a light omnibus on a smooth road. The usual omnibus horses, for instance, in central London mostly wear well. They do their six or seven years' hard

work, often a good deal more, and after that are sold for 20*l.* to 30*l.*, and do good service for many more years under less strenuous circumstances. Again, on the contrary side, Mr. George Fleming, a great veterinary authority, who was consulted by Dr. Collier on the diseases of greyhounds and racehorses, and of hounds and hunters, had no doubt that a vast number die from diseases of the heart and blood-vessels.

With these and similar facts it is at first sight not easy to reconcile the discoveries of Dr. Morgan. They appear contradictory as well as contrary. We are on the horns of a dilemma. We are confronted by two syllogisms, each with proven premisses and logical conclusions :

Violent exercise produces heart disease.

The University Boat Race is violent exercise.

Therefore the University Boat Race produces heart disease.

In opposition to these conclusions we have the undeniable, though empiric, statement that 'the University Boat Race does not produce heart disease.' The hole in the fallacy is to be found in the second premiss of our syllogism. Violent exercise, in order to be harmful, must either reach an extreme point of violence or extend over a long stretch of time. It is not only the pace that kills, though pace will kill in extreme bouts. Therefore it is safe to conclude that the effort extracted by the race from Putney to Mortlake is not 'jerky' enough to harm a sound man, and that indulgence in rowing of this nature will not be harmful if it is not continued for more than three or four years. The oarsman's life is saved by the shortness of his University career.

But rowing is not the only branch of athletics. It is at least possible that the goddess of Henley is propitious, while she of Queen's Club is inimical to the health of her votaries. Rowing, too, in pre-University days is much less ardently practised than other branches of sport, and hitherto the inquiry has not ventured into athletics at schools. Empiricists, however, of long experience, as well as physiological specialists, agree in deciding that boys very seldom indeed do themselves harm by games. They cannot, for the simple reason that their muscles are not sufficiently hard to give the body 'a bad time.' Long before the point of bodily exhaustion is reached the limbs refuse to perform their functions. Again and again in school races you see boys stop or 'go to nothing,' without showing any of the signs usually associated with exhaustion. The will and muscle together are not powerful

enough to put compulsion on reluctant limbs. This good result is partly due to the praiseworthy inadequacy of preparatory training, and hence a scheme lately mooted to establish interschool sports cannot be too strongly deprecated. The deprecation for the moment has only reference to the undesirable practice, which would constantly ensue, of boys running on abominable cinder tracks and hardening their growing muscle prematurely. The question of the effect of such matches on character and intellect must be left to later solution. Football, again, at schools (excluding accidents) is harmless for similar reasons.

However, the effect of football and athletics is very different on grown men—if undergraduates come under that description. Both games are too modern to have made an adequate collection of statistics possible. The first Inter-University sports were held in 1864, and the first football match not till 1870. If we played football as it is played in America, we should have no hesitation in deciding immediately that its practice is harmful to health. The amount of energy, not to say roughness, that they can put into a game over the water brings Americans into quite a different class from ourselves. For instance, the American writer quoted above was overcome with astonishment because at a dinner held after the Inter-University Football Match he could not conjecture from any expression of despondency on their faces which men had been found on the losing side in the afternoon's game. He adds, speaking quite incidentally in the course of a contrast between English and American ways: 'The outcome of a contest is not taken so seriously (in England). The sight, familiar to us, of members of a defeated football eleven throwing themselves prostrate on the ground in the agony of bitter disappointment would indeed make Englishmen stare in wonderment.' It would, indeed; and if we cultivated such enthusiasm as this, and trained and played with the vigour implied in the keenness, we should inevitably do ourselves damage. There is a point at which zeal, like mania, overcomes the instinct of self-preservation, which normally is always present, however sure we may feel that we are putting forth our full strength. It is certain both that the maniac owes his strength to the loss of this instinct and that an athlete may acquire similar strength by a similar breach of Nature's law. But in England, where such extremity of ardour is rare, we cannot think that indulgence in football—unless it be carried on to an extreme age—can do a man constitutional damage. Of course,

in all such general statements, we leave out of consideration both the man who is handicapped by hereditary weakness and the occasional raving enthusiast who will play the Association game four times a week, Rugby twice, and take a fifteen-mile walk on Sunday.

Athletics proper do not quite come under the same category as football. A man can, and not seldom does, run himself to pieces, to all appearance. He collapses totally as he reaches the tape, and is often not very quick to recover. Further, he has undergone a heavy bout of training, with its attendant benefits or damage. In assessing the effect of the preparation and the subsequent culminating effort in a running race we may, however, get some help from the rowing statistics. As exemplified in the current year, it is a common occurrence to see men both at Henley and at Mortlake so overtaxed that they either faint or have to be lifted in a helpless condition from the boat. The fact that the presence of seven other swinging backs makes it impossible for a man to give up till the goal is reached, assisting the sort of mechanical power we possess of using muscle long after the senses of sight and sound and thought are blurred into monotone, is likely to reduce oarsmen to a condition more deplorable than that of a runner running 'on his own.' If, then, these oarsmen have not suffered permanent harm from their race, it would seem to follow that athletes are at least in an equally safe case. Neither the race on the water nor on the track calls for a violent enough jerk to do one definite piece of present injury to the valves of the heart or to the blood-vessels. The heart has suffered only as the muscles of the leg have suffered; the extreme exercise has temporarily rendered the two incapable of a proper fulfilment of function. As in the limb, so in the heart, there has been no sprain. There has also been no strain, if and supposing the training and the series of races do not extend over too many weeks and years. The runner, like the rower, is saved by the shortness of the period over which he exercises his vocation. Should a man run and race all the year round and continue this activity after he has, say, left the University, dilatation and 'heart bother' are at least in danger of accruing. The inveterate 'pot-hunter' will find his due reward.

Although we have no actual pedestrian statistics by which to corroborate or refute our analogical conclusion, yet, judging from casual instances that have undergone no scientific grouping, it seems—in contradiction of theoretical probability—that athletes



do not come out from their ordeal so scot-free as oarsmen. By 'athletes' in this connection we mean only runners of races from a quarter of a mile upwards. The reason, the hole in the analogy, is not far to seek. Pedestrians are not, like rowers, picked men. More often than not long-distance runners are small men, in some cases blessed with no particular physique; and they differ in this respect from runners who combine speed with endurance—in the technical phrase, middle-distance runners—who almost invariably are marked by a certain size or robustness. Hence athletes who can run and race successfully without the help of frames constitutionally adapted for the work are much more liable than 'the giants of the river' to suffer the penalties of over-exertion. Again, the University oarsmen are rigorously examined by a doctor as a preliminary to qualification for a racing crew. In the sport of athletics, on the other hand, being less communistic, there is more difficulty in insuring such inspection. The result is that men with hearts already 'all over the place' hurry their weakness into premature development by hard racing, and then blame their sport. For such men athletics *without competition* are often salvation, while the added element renders the sport deadly in the extreme.

The immediate object of this inquiry into the well-being of athletes is not to raise an old controversy and to promulgate partisan arguments, but to point out an athletic omission and to suggest a method of filling it. It will be clear from what has been said that the athletic devotee in any branch—rowing, football, pedestrianism—necessarily develops a strength of lung and heart beyond the restful man of more sedentary habits. Now, big lungs and a strong heart are the best constitutional outfit a man or woman can acquire. Prolonged and vigorous movement raises the quality of a healthy man's body on to a higher plane. The athlete sets out to win an ideal of health which others have surrendered. But there still remains the question (as high aims are harmful unless adapted to capacity) whether the athlete or the dawdler attains the greater *relative* height. Is it true that in hygiene, as well as in morals, 'lofty designs must end in like effects'?

Undoubtedly the athlete encumbers himself. The strong heart and big lungs which raise their possessor above his fellows are as likely as not to be his ruin if he forgets his debt to these his benefactors. If the two organs are allowed to depreciate unduly, they become in their degenerate state a source of danger

to which the originally or chronically weak organ of the oppidan clerk is not liable. It is because of this state of depreciation that sometimes in later life an 'old Blue' finds himself more knocked up by a hard day than less athletic companions. He forgets that months or years of muscular idleness have diminished the size and strength of his internal muscles, but, trusting to the old feeling of elation that comes with the occasional chance of exercise, gives his heart and lungs to do in one day the work that should have been spread over weeks. Consequently he finds himself suffering from over-rapid dilatation of the heart muscles. The world says, see what athletics have done for that man! In reality, before this one bout of excessive exertion disease was not even incipient in the athlete, but he suffered because the 'shrinkage dimensions' of his heart had rendered possible, even probable, a too rapid return to the old 'area of expansion.'

There are three ways of avoiding this danger. The first is to start life with a determination to avoid all great exertion. The second is, after the athletic period, to take infinite care never to cycle fast, or walk far, or climb a hill. The third is to remain an athlete from start to finish. Of these alternatives, the first, the complete surrender of athletics, from moral and mental reasons, which need another essay to themselves, would be deadly to the majority of Anglo-Saxons, in spite of the example of Mr. Chamberlain. It would also be waste of time to inculcate such an abstinence. The second alternative involves a vigilant carefulness, destructive of pleasure and promotive of selfishness. The third alternative in our seeming is the only one at once feasible, sensible, and progressive.

The crux to most people will seem to lie in the theory's feasibility: how is it possible for the slave of the lamp or the desk to find adequate leisure or energy for the right maintenance of the muscles of the body? Long hours and short holidays leave little intervals, and not seldom the need for rest seems greater than the need for exercise. Further, intermittent exertions promote the worst evils that can befall the external organs. A football match now and then, even as often as once a week, is likely to be worse than nothing if the games are bridged by periods of athletic lethargy. Even the cycle, the greatest of boons to 'week-enders,' provides rather relaxation and change than a wholesome method of muscular development. Too often a hollow chest is the chief physical effect resulting to the

wheel's votaries. The solution of the difficulty we believe to lie in the *cultivation of gymnastics*, the true coping-stone of athletics. It is extraordinary how little effort is needed to maintain a state of development which it may have taken years to reach. Just as in the domain of intellect the knowledge of a language may be kept and increased by a daily ten minutes' devotion, so the muscles of body and limb will readily respond to the slightest attentions, if they are shown every day. During the last two or three years home gymnastics, so to speak, have been developed almost into a science. The newest text-books give exact instruction as to the movements that develop each particular muscle. Paraphernalia are unnecessary, although gymnastic appliances—even if they do not extend beyond a pulley in the bedroom and a pair of dumb bells—are both a help and a stimulus. We are as apt to despise gymnastics as much as the Germans exaggerate their importance. We neglect our bodies, they their legs. Of course it is dull to swing your arms or try to touch your toes for even short daily periods. But if this short-lived dulness gives us good hearts, lungs and muscles fitted for any sudden call, there seems some foolishness in neglecting this easy means to so considerable an end. It is the fittest who survive, and fitness is the athlete's aim. But his greater fitness will suffer untoward depreciation unless he takes trouble to stay on the higher plane. Physically, not less than morally, it is true, *'corruptio optimi pessima.'*

Granted the fact of subsequent maintenance, the value of athletics to health seems to be as irrefutable as the effect of athletics on spirit. Gladstone as certainly owed health to the trees he felled as the charge across the football ground at Malakand was made spirited by the nature of the arena.

The worth of athletics in connection with the intellectual and moral growth opens a bigger subject, which merits separate treatment. We hope on another occasion to propose 'this test:

The body at its best,

How far can that project the soul on its lone way?'

—a question which again needs the help of statistics. As a contribution to its solution a complete list of the after-careers and intellectual achievements of 'Blues' is now being collected by one of the University clubs.

W. BEACH THOMAS.

## CONFERENCES ON BOOKS AND MEN.

## XII.

MR. H. D. TRAILL—A SCHOOL OF LITERATURE—COMIC VERSE—  
AN AMERICAN GILBERT.

WE were conferring last month about the four men of genius with a gift for writing prose whom Fate snatched from us within a few days of each other, as if to mark with a holocaust the advent of the closing year of the century. But before the Conference was in print a fifth had joined them in the person of Mr. H. D. Traill. Mr. Traill was one of the few writers of the day who possessed wit in the sense that word bore to our forefathers; that is to say, he could produce detachable sayings, good things, epigrams, that might be quoted as Traill's latest, just as we quote the good things of Porson, or Rogers, or Sydney Smith. It must be some sixteen years since I read 'The New Lucian,' but I can still recall such sentences as 'Amnesty, after all, is only the Greek for forgetfulness,' and 'I have noticed that the definitions of Churchmen are often as animated as lay invectives.' It would be well if some admirer would make a collection of such floating Trailliana as are recoverable, and add to them the best passages from his Dialogues, because the Dialogues themselves are not bound for futurity. It always seemed to me a curious lapse in humour as well as in critical sagacity on Mr. Traill's part to have entitled his book 'The New Lucian,' as though Lucian might stand picturesquely for dead dialogues, as Priscian stands for dead grammar, and Galen for dead physic. As soon might we have a new Molière, or a new Cervantes, or a new Shakespeare, as a new Lucian. And Mr. Traill's Dialogues, with all their cleverness and learning and satire, never for a single moment recall Lucian. His dialogue is too 'bearded,' as Lucian would have said; and then again it wants ease and fluidity. There is too much of the *stoccado* and *passado*, and standing on distance, not enough sweet touches and quick venews of wit, snip-snap, quick and home. The conversations have all the finish of a carefully played game of chess, and produce something of the same effect of tedium on the

bystanders. And not infrequently the moral and political philosopher eclipses the satirist altogether, and we have only a 'new Lyttleton.' In fact, while—to use an ancient and useful distinction—Mr. Traill was a wit, rather than a humourist, he was also a political philosopher even more than a wit. So that he will probably make his appeal to posterity by something else than pure literature. In my memory his name will always be green as the writer of some most vivacious parodies which delighted my adolescence, and which seem somehow to be better than those which are being so freely written to-day. They appeared in the Christmas number of the 'World' newspaper for 1882, in 'The Poets in Symposium.' Mr. Swinburne sang of his imitators—

They strut like jays in my lendings,  
They chatter and screech ; I sing.  
They mimic my phrases and endings,  
And rum old Testament ring ;  
But the lyrical cry isn't in it,  
And the high gods spot in a minute  
That 't isn't the genuine thing.

Matthew Arnold sings a little ditty entitled 'Bottles; or, the Deceased Wife's Sister.'

I take the suffering middle class,  
I read each vice, each weakness clear ;  
Eyeing it calmly through my glass,  
And say, 'Thou ailest here and here.

'Abounds thy knowledge in defect,  
All stunted is thy beauty sense,  
Undisciplined thy intellect,  
To manners hast thou no pretence.'

I say this on the lecture stage  
Of Institute and College new ;  
I say't in Jemmy Knowles's page,  
And in John Morley's late 'Review.'

And having thus the view I took  
Of this long years ago made plain,  
I write a preface to a book  
And there I say it all again.

Circumstances over which, as the phrase goes, I have had no control have obliged me of late to devote a good deal of attention to a branch of literature too little regarded by the rank and file of students, because it is still as in mediæval times reproduced by scribes instead of by printers. Shakespeare's most recent biographer, who has a cormorant's appetite for hard facts and

a hare's distrust of theories (though I am bound to admit that his volume appeared before Colonel Baden-Powell's book on Scouting had made us all theorists), dismisses with scant courtesy the old-fashioned idea that Shakespeare received some early training in a lawyer's office. He thinks that the poet's undoubtedly accurate and intimate knowledge of legal phraseology is sufficiently accounted for by his father's many lawsuits and his own acquaintance among members of the Inns of Court. But a man may have lawsuits without learning much of the law; and my own experience of the familiar converse of Templars is that they talk much like other Englishmen. The idea has been lately borne in upon my mind, and I share it with my readers for what it is worth, that the extraordinary precision and flexibility of Shakespeare's style may be due to an early study of leases and other legal documents. However this may be, I hazard the opinion that half a year's apprenticeship in a lawyer's office would be admirable training for most young literary aspirants. They would be given certain provisions to express, and they would by practice come to be able to express them so that no loophole of escape should remain for the person whom they were to bind. Such practice would bring, of course, precision; and it would also bring flexibility, because flexibility comes from a many-sided view, and a lawyer learns to keep a wide look-out all round him for possible subterfuges. Let me give an example of what strikes me as a most admirable paragraph from a document it has been my fortune to have had to read with some care:—

Provided always, and it is hereby agreed and declared, that notwithstanding anything herein contained, the said lessor shall have power without obtaining any consent from, or making any compensation to, the said lessee, to deal as he may think fit with any other land, buildings, or premises adjoining, or near, or opposite to, or facing (whether in front, rear, or otherwise), the premises hereby demised, or any part thereof, or to erect or suffer to be erected on such other land or premises any buildings whatever, whether such buildings shall or shall not affect or diminish the light or air, which may now, or at any time during the term hereby granted, be enjoyed by the lessee or other the tenants or occupiers of the premises hereby demised.

Surely that paragraph is a masterpiece for precision; and that is not all. I think no unprejudiced student of this and similar passages will deny that in addition to the mere qualities of writing which a legal training must stimulate, the higher qualities of the imagination are also brought into play. What a picture, for instance, the last sentence summons up of the lessee with his

family and friends around him, not simply as abstractions, John Does and Richard Roes, but actual human beings, alive and glad to be alive, *carpentes vitales auras*, as the spirited Latin has it, rejoicing in the air and sunlight! Surely that is a view of mankind that is worth dwelling upon, and one that it is refreshing to find in a legal agreement. What a vision too is suggested of the vast and inexhaustible supplies of sunlight and air, always at man's service; so that whether his term of residence be for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, he may always count upon them! I fear in this passage the natural affinity between law and poetry has almost too violently asserted itself; for exact truth compels me to confess that the sunlight at present enjoyed by the lessee is, and has been for many weeks, purely imaginary. Let me add two other short specimen passages where the joy in distinction and the joy in enumeration rise to an almost lyrical rapture.

And also shall and will, at his own expense, do and execute all such works as are or may, under or by virtue of any Act or Acts of Parliament, passed or hereafter to be passed, and for the time being in force, be directed or required to be done or executed, in respect of the said demised premises, whether by the landlord or tenant thereof.

And also will at all times during the said term, when need shall require, well and substantially repair, support, amend, point, paint, and cleanse the premises hereby demised, and all walls, ways, roads, and appurtenances thereto belonging, or used or enjoyed therewith, with all needful reparations, cleansings, and amendments whatsoever.

St. David's Day, which ought henceforth to be Ladysmith Day, only that the English have no memory for festivals (how many members of Parliament, unless they have just been to see Mr. Benson's 'Henry V.,'<sup>1</sup> know that Agincourt was fought on St. Crispin, and how many of those know when St. Crispin's Day comes?)—Ladysmith Day, then, brought me from America three volumes by an unknown author, which, though not pitched in a martial strain, were in key with the new gaiety of heart

<sup>1</sup> As we go to press the Queen's Proclamation is issued, ordering that all ranks in Her Majesty's Irish regiments shall wear, as a distinction, a sprig of shamrock in their head-dress to commemorate the gallantry of her Irish soldiers during the recent battles in South Africa. Had Her Majesty, I wonder, been reading 'Henry V.' lately, and come upon Fluellen's speech?—'Your majesty says very true: if your majesties is remembered of it, the Welshmen did good service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps; which your majesty know to this hour is an honourable badge of the service; and I do believe your majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek upon Saint Tavy's day' (iv. 7. 100). King William III. is said to have been the last of our sovereigns who so embellished his crown.



which the first day of March brought to all Englishmen. A week before they would have seemed vain and foolish; but arriving at a moment of mad hilarity, they seemed as good as Gilbert. It is worthy of remark how very few tolerable writers there are of comic verse. Parodists and academic wits abound, but comic poets are rare birds; as rare as low comedians. I used in days gone by to be an admirer of the muse of Mr. James Frank Sullivan, whose drawings in *Fun* once redeemed that so-called comic paper from contempt. His book of drawings has long, I am told, been out of print, and I rarely meet with any one who knows of them. But his 'British Workman, by one who does not believe in him,' was an admirable study; and no less admirable were many of the accompanying sketches, such as 'The Professional and Amateur Models,' 'The Waiter,' 'False Delicacy,' &c. I do not know whether his fugitive rhymes have ever been recaptured. At the moment I can only recall one, which ran something as follows:

'This dinner set for seven pounds,'

The customer observed, 'is cheap

Beyond my expectation's bounds.'

But oh! he wasn't very deep.

For when the service home they brought

According to his stated wish,

The party looked in vain for aught

Beyond a solitary dish.

'I'll back that dinner-set to top

All others I have ever seen,'

He said, returning to the shop;

'But you forgot the soup-tureen.'

'No service that you've ever seen,'

The shopman said, 'I beg to state,

Included any soup-tureen;

But you can have it separate.'

'That dinner-set is very nice,'

The buyer said, 'upon my soul,

And singularly cheap in price;

But you forgot the salad-bowl.'

'A salad-bowl,' the man explained,

'It is a thing I never knew

That any dinner-set contained;

But we can get it made for you.'

And so it went on. That is a sufficiently good instance of what I mean by a comic poem; it has an amusing idea, which is amusingly worked out. Mr. Oliver Herford, the American writer

whose books have just reached me, is not, I believe, known in this country; so that I may be doing some service by introducing him to the readers of CORNHILL. Like Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan, he draws pictures to illustrate his own verses, and when that is the case, the one art necessarily suffers in its divorce from the other. But that cannot be helped. The first book of Mr. Herford's, 'Artful Antics,' seems to have been published as long ago as 1888. It is in intention a child's book, but contains verses here and there capable of amusing grave and reverend seniors. A second volume, 'The Bashful Earthquake,' dates from 1898. Some of the best of the verses are those which treat of beasts. The crocodile and the giraffe seem especial favourites with Mr. Herford. Here is a poem on the former creature:

A Crocodile once dropped a line  
To a Fox to invite him to dine;  
But the Fox wrote to say  
*He was dining that day*  
With a Bird friend, and begged to decline.

She sent off at once to a Goat,  
'Pray don't disappoint me,' she wrote;  
But he answer'd too late  
*He'd forgotten the date,*  
Having thoughtlessly eaten her note.

That is a very characteristic touch, and shows an appreciative student of goat nature.

The Crocodile thought him ill-bred,  
And invited two Rabbits instead;  
But the Rabbits replied  
*They were hopelessly tied*  
By a previous engagement, and fled.

Then she wrote in despair to some Eels  
And begged them to drop in to meals;  
But the Eels left their cards  
*With their coldest regards,*  
And took to what went for their heels.

Cried the Crocodile then, in disgust,  
'My motives they seem to mistrust.  
Their suspicions are base;  
Since they don't know their place,  
I suppose if I *must* starve, I *must*!'

The same motive is used again in the ballad of the 'Artful Ant.' The artfulness of this insect lay in her successful catering

for a ball supper for a hundred guests, 'all the birds and beasts she knew, and many more beside,' entirely without cost to herself.

From here and there and everywhere  
The happy creatures came,  
The Fish alone could not be there.  
(And they were not to blame.  
'They really could not stand the air,  
But thanked her just the same.')

The Lion, bowing very low,  
Said to the Ant: 'I ne'er  
Since Noah's Ark remember so  
Delightful an affair.'  
(A pretty compliment, although  
He really wasn't there.)

They danced, and danced, and danced, and danced;  
It was a jolly sight!  
They pranced, and pranced, and pranced, and pranced,  
Till it was nearly light!  
And then their thoughts to supper chanced  
To turn. (As well they might!)

Then said the Ant: 'It's only right  
That supper should begin,  
And if you will be so polite,  
Pray *take each other in*.'  
(The emphasis was very slight,  
But rested on '*take in*.')

They needed not a second call;  
They took the hint. Oh, yes,  
The largest guest 'took in' the small,  
The small 'took in' the less,  
The less 'took in' the least of all.  
(It was a great success!)

As for the rest—but why spin out  
This narrative of woe?  
The Lion took them in about  
As fast as they could go.  
(And went home, looking very stout,  
And walking very slow.)

And when the Ant, not long ago,  
Lost to all sense of shame,  
Tried it again, I chance to know  
That not one answer came.  
(Save from the Fish, who 'could not go,  
But thanked her all the same.')

The same motive recurs in a poem called 'The Lion's Tour;' and when one considers the manners of wild beasts, it is not

extraordinary that a poet who keeps an eye on the object should have to devote a great deal of his observation to their meals. It is found also, with a difference, in the following so-called 'Fable,' though what exactly the moral may be the fabulist does not tell us.

It was a hungry pussy cat  
Upon Thanksgiving morn,  
And she watched a thankful little mouse  
That ate an ear of corn.

'If I ate that thankful little mouse,  
How thankful he should be,  
When he has made a meal himself,  
To make a meal for me !

'Then with his thanks for having fed,  
And his thanks for feeding me,  
With all *his* thankfulness inside,  
How thankful *I* shall be !'

Thus mused the hungry pussy cat  
Upon Thanksgiving Day;  
But the little mouse had overheard,  
And declined (with thanks) to stay.

Here is another Cat and Mouse poem, this time with a plain moral :

It was a tragic little mouse  
All bent on suicide  
Because another little mouse  
Refused to be his bride.

'Alas,' he squeaked, 'I shall not wed !  
My heart and paw she spurns ;  
I'll hie me to the cat instead,  
From whence no mouse returns.'

The playful cat met him half-way,  
Said she, 'I feel for you ;  
You're dying for a mouse, you say,  
I'm dying for one too !'

Now when Miss Mouse beheld his doom,  
Struck with remorse, she cried,  
'In death we'll meet ! O cat, make room  
For one more mouse inside !'

The playful cat was charmed ; said she,  
'I shall be, in a sense,  
Your pussy catafalque !' Ah me !  
It was her last offence !

Reader, take warning from this tale,  
And shun the punster's trick ;  
Those mice, for fear lest cats might fail,  
Had eaten arsenic !

Mr. Herford's latest volume is entitled an 'Alphabet of Celebrities;' but the fun here, depending upon the bringing together of incongruous people, is perhaps intended to lie more in the pictures than the poetry, which is of this sort :

C is Columbus who tries to explain  
How to balance an egg—to the utter disdain  
Of Confucius, Carlyle, Cleopatra, and Cain.

The humour here may be understood to lurk in giving Cain the features of a popular novelist of the same name, and putting Carlyle and Cleopatra on the same sofa.

URBANUS SYLVAN.

## THE ISLE OF UNREST.<sup>1</sup>

BY HENRY SETON MERRIMAN,

AUTHOR OF 'THE SOWERS,' 'WITH EDGED TOOLS,' 'IN KEDAR'S TENTS,' ETC.

### CHAPTER X.

#### THUS FAR.

'There are some occasions on which a man must sell half his secret in order to conceal the rest.'

'THERE is some one moving among the oleanders down by the river,' said the count, coming quickly into the room where Lory de Vasselot was sitting, one morning some days after his unexpected arrival at the château.

The old man was cool enough, but he closed the window that led to the small terrace where he cultivated his carnations, with that haste which indicates a recognition of undeniable danger, coupled with no feeling of fear.

'I know every branch in the valley,' he said; 'every twig, every leaf, every shadow. There is some one there.'

Lory rose, and laid aside the pen with which he was writing for an extended leave of absence. In four days these two had, as one of them had predicted, grown accustomed to each other. And the line between custom and necessity is a fine-drawn one.

'Show me,' he said, going towards the window.

'Ah!' murmured the count, jerking his head. 'You will hardly perceive it unless you are a hunter—or the hunted.'

Lory glanced at his father. Assuredly the sleeping mind was beginning to rouse itself.

'It is nothing but the stirring of a leaf here, the movement of a branch there, which are unusual and unnatural.'

As he spoke he opened the window with that slow caution which had become habitual to his every thought and action.

'There,' he said, pointing with a steady hand; 'to the left of that almond-tree which is still in bloom. Watch those willows

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1899, by H. S. Scott, in the United States of America.

which have come there since the wall fell away and the terrace slipped into the flooded river twenty-one years this spring. You will see the branches move. There—there! You see. It is a man, and he comes too slowly to have an honest purpose.'

'I see,' said Lory. 'Is that land ours?'

The count gave an odd little laugh.

'You can see nothing from this window that is not ours,' he answered. 'As much as any other man's,' he added, after a pause. For the conviction still holds good in some Corsican minds that the mountains are common property.

'He is coming slowly, but not very cautiously,' said Lory. 'Not like a man who thinks that he may be watched from here. He probably is taking no heed of these windows, for he thinks the place is deserted.'

'It is more probable,' replied the count, 'that he is coming here to ascertain that fact. What the abbé has heard, another may hear, though he would not learn it from the abbé. If you want a secret kept, tell it to a priest, and of all priests, the Abbé Susini. Some one has heard that you are here in Corsica, and is creeping up to the castle to find out.'

'And I will go and find him out. Two can play at that game in the bushes,' said Lory, with a laugh.

'If you go, take a gun; one can never tell how a game may turn.'

'Yes; I will take a gun if you wish it.' And Lory went towards the door. 'No,' he said, pausing in answer to a gesture made by his father, 'not that one. It is of too old a make.'

And he went out of the room, leaving his father holding in his hand the gun with which he had shot Andrei Perucca thirty years before. He stood looking at the closed door with dim reflective eyes. Then he looked at the gun, which he set slowly back in its corner.

'It seems,' he said to himself, 'that I am of too old a make also.'

He went to the window, and, opening it cautiously, stood looking down into the valley. There he perceived that, though two may play at the same game, it is usually given to one to play it better than the other. For he who was climbing up the hill might be followed by a careful eye, by the chance displacement of a twig, the bending of a bough; while Lory, creeping down into the valley, remained quite invisible, even to his father, upon whose memory every shadow was imprinted.

'Aha!' laughed the old man, under his breath. 'One sees



that the boy is a Corsican. And,' he added, after a pause, 'one would almost say that the other is not.'

In which the count's trained eye—trained as only is the vision of the hunted—was by no means deceived. For Lory, who was far down in the valley, had already caught sight of a braided sleeve, and, a moment later, recognised Colonel Gilbert. The colonel not only failed to perceive him, but was in nowise looking for him. He appeared to be entirely absorbed, first in the examination of the ground beneath his feet, and then in the contemplation of the rising land. In his hand he seemed to be carrying a notebook, and, so far as the watcher could see, consulted from time to time a compass.

'He is only engaged in his trade,' said Lory to himself, with a laugh; and, going out into the open, he sat down on a rock with the gun across his knee and waited.

Thus it happened that Colonel Gilbert, working his way up through the bushes, notebook in hand, looked up and saw, within a few yards of him, the owner of the land upon which they stood, whom he had every reason to believe to be in Paris.

His ruddy face was of a deeper red as he slipped his notebook within his tunic and came forward, holding out his hand. But his smile was as ready and good-natured as ever.

'Well met!' he said. 'You find me, count, taking a professional and business-like survey of the land that you promised to sell me.'

'You are welcome to take the survey,' answered Lory, taking the outstretched cordial hand, 'but I must ask you to let me keep the land. I did not take your offer seriously.'

'It was intended seriously, I assure you.'

'Then it was my mistake,' answered Lory, quite pleasantly.

He tapped himself vigorously on the chest, and made a gesture indicating that at a word from the colonel he was ready to lay violent hands upon himself for having been so foolish. The colonel laughed, and shrugged his shoulders as if the matter were but a small one. The pitiless Mediterranean, almost African, sun poured down on them, and one of those short spells of absolute calm, which are characteristic of these latitudes, made it unbearably hot. The colonel took off his cap, and, sitting down in quite a friendly way near de Vasselot on a rock, proceeded to mop his high forehead, pressing back the thin smooth hair which was touched here and there with grey.

'You have come here at the wrong time,' he said. 'The heats have begun. One longs for the cool breezes of Paris or of Normandy.'

And he paused, giving Lory an opportunity of explaining why he had come at this time, which opportunity was promptly neglected.

'At all events, count,' said the colonel, replacing his cap and lighting a cigarette, 'I did not deceive you as to the nature of the land which I wished to buy. It is a desert, as you see. And yet I cannot help thinking that something might be made of this land.'

He sat and gazed lazily in front of him. Presently, leaving his cigarette to smoulder, he began to buzz through his teeth, in the bucolic manner, an air of Offenbach. He was, in a word, entirely agricultural, and consequently slow of speech.

'Yes, count,' he said, with conviction, after a long pause; 'there is only one drawback to Corsica.'

'Ah?'

'The Corsicans,' said the colonel gravely. 'You do not know them as I do; for I suppose you have only been here a few days?'

De Vasselot's quick eyes glanced for a moment at the colonel's face, but no reply was made to the supposition. Then the colonel fell to his guileless Offenbach again. There is nothing so innocent as the meditative rendering of a well-known tune. A popular air is that which echoes in empty heads.

Colonel Gilbert glanced sideways at his companion. He had not thought that this was a silent man. Nature was singularly at fault in her mouldings if this slightly made dark-eyed Frenchman was habitually taciturn. And the colonel was vaguely uneasy.

'My horse,' he said, 'is up at Olméta. I took a walk round by the river. It is my business to answer innumerable questions from the Ministry of the Interior. Railway projects are still in the air, you understand. I must know my Corsica. Besides, as I tell you, I thought I was on my own land.'

'I am sorry that I cannot hold to my joke, for it was nothing else, as you know.'

'Yes, yes, of course,' acquiesced the colonel. 'And in the meantime, it is a great pleasure to see you here, as well as a surprise. I need hardly tell you that your presence here is quite unknown to your neighbours. We have little to talk about at this end of the island now that the Administration is centred more than ever at Ajaccio; and were it known in the district that

you are at Vasselot, you may be sure I should have heard of it at the café or at the hotel where I dine.'

'Yes. I came without drum or trumpet.'

'You are wise.'

The remark was made so significantly that Lory could not ignore it even if such a course had recommended itself to one of his quick and impulsive nature.

'What do you mean, colonel?'

Gilbert made a little gesture of the hand that held the half-burnt cigarette. He deprecated, it would appear, having been drawn to talk on so serious a topic.

'Well, I speak as one Frenchman to another, as one soldier to another. If the emperor does not die, he will declare war against Germany. There is the situation in a nutshell, is it not? And do you think the army can afford to lose one man at the present time, especially a man who has made good use of such small opportunities of distinction as the fates have offered him? And, so far as I have been able to follow the intricacies of the parochial politics, your life is not worth two sous in this country, my dear count. There, I have spoken. A word to the wise, is it not?'

He rose, and threw away his cigarette with a nod and a smile.

'And now I must be returning. You will allow me to pass up that small pathway that leads past the château. Some day I should, above all things, like to see the château. I am interested in old houses, I tell you frankly.'

'I will walk part of the way with you,' answered Lory, with a stiffness which was entirely due to a sense of self-reproach. For it was his instinct to be hospitable and open-handed and friendly. And Lory would have liked to ask the colonel then and there to come to the château.

'By the way,' said the colonel, as they climbed the hill together, 'I did not, of course, mean to suggest that you should sell me the old house which bears your name—only a piece of land, a few hectares on this south-west slope, that I may amuse myself with agriculture, as I told you. Perhaps some day you may reconsider your decision?'

He waited for a reply to this suggestion, or an invitation in response to the hint that he was interested in the old house. But neither came.

'I am much obliged to you for your warning as to the un-

popularity of my name in this district,' said Lory, rather laboriously changing the subject. 'I had, of course, heard something of the same sort before; but I do not attach much importance to local tradition, do you?'

The colonel paused for a few minutes. He had the leisurely conversational manner of an old man.

'These people have undergone a change,' he said at length, 'since their final subjugation by ourselves—exactly a hundred years ago, by the way. They were a turbulent, fighting, obstinate people. Those qualities—good enough in times of war—go bad in times of peace. They are a lawless, idle, dishonest people now. Their grand fighting qualities have run to seed in municipal disagreements and electioneering squabbles. And, worst of all, we have grafted on them our French thrift, which has run to greed. There is not a man in the district who would shoot you, count, from any idea of the vendetta, but there are a hundred who would do it for a thousand-franc note, or in order to prevent you taking back the property which he has stolen from you. That is how it stands. And that is why Pietro Andrei came to grief at Olmeta.'

'And Mattei Perucca?' asked Lory, thereby causing the colonel to trip suddenly over a stone.

'Oh, Perucca,' he answered. 'That was different. He died a more or less natural death. He was a very stout man, and, on receiving a letter, gave way to such ungovernable rage that he fell in a fit. True, it was a threatening letter; but such are common enough in this country. It may have been a joke or may have had some comparatively harmless object. None could have foreseen such a result.'

They were now near the château, and the colonel rather suddenly shook hands and went away.

'I am always to be found at Bastia, and am always at your service,' he said, waving a farewell with his whip.

Lory found the door of the château ajar, and Jean watching behind it. His father, however, seemed to have forgotten upon what mission he had gone forth, and was sitting placidly in the little room, lighted by a skylight, where they always lived. The sight of Lory reminded him, however.

'Who was it?' he asked, without showing a very keen interest.

'It was a man called Gilbert,' answered Lory, 'whom I have met in Paris. An engineer. He is stationed at Bastia, and is connected with the railway scheme. A man I should like to like,

and yet—— He ought to be a good fellow. He has every qualification, and yet——'

Lory did not finish the sentence, but stood reflectively looking at his father.

'He has more than once offered to buy Vasselot,' he said, watching for the effect.

'You must never sell Vasselot,' replied the old man. He did not seem to conceive it possible that there should be any temptation to do so.

'I do not quite understand Colonel Gilbert,' continued Lory. 'He has also offered to buy Perucca; but there I think he has to deal with a clever woman.'

## CHAPTER XI.

### BY SURPRISE.

*'C'est ce qu'on ne dit pas qui explique ce qu'on dit.'*

FROM the Rue du Cherche-Midi in Paris to the Casa Perucca in Corsica is as complete a change as even the heart of woman may desire. For the Rue du Cherche-Midi is probably the noisiest corner of that noisy Paris that lies south of the Seine; and the Casa Perucca is one of the few quiet corners of Europe where the madding crowd is non-existent, and that crowning effort of philanthropic folly, the statute holiday, has yet to penetrate.

'Yes,' said Mademoiselle Brun, one morning, after she and Denise had passed two months in what she was pleased to term exile; 'yes, it is peaceful. Give me war,' she added grimly, after a pause.

They were standing on the terrace that looked down over the great valley of Vasselot. There was not a house in sight except the crumbling château. The month was June, and the river, which could be heard in winter, was now little more than a trickling stream. A faint breeze stirred the young leaves of the copper beech, which is a silent tree by nature, and did not so much as whisper now. There are few birds in Corsica, for the natives are great sportsmen, and will shoot, sitting, anything from a man to a sparrow in season and out.

'Listen,' said Mademoiselle Brun, holding up one steady yellow finger; but the silence was such as will make itself felt.

'And the neighbours do not call much,' added mademoiselle, in completion of her own thoughts.

Denise laughed. She had been up early, for they were almost alone in the Casa Perucca now. The servants who had obeyed Mattei Perucca in fear and trembling had refused to obey Denise, who, with much spirit, had dismissed them one and all. An old man remained, who was generally considered to be half-witted; and Maria Andrei, the widow of Pietro, who was shot at Olmeta. Denise superintended the small farm.

'That cheery Maria,' said Mademoiselle Brun, 'she is our only resource, and reminds me of a cheap funeral.'

'There is the colonel,' said Denise; 'you forget him.'

'Yes; there is the colonel, who is so kind to us.'

And Mademoiselle Brun slowly contemplated the whole landscape, taking in Denise, as it were, in passing.

'And there is our little friend,' she added, 'down in the valley there who does not call.'

'Why do you call him little?' asked Denise, looking down at the Château de Vasselot. 'He is not little.'

'He is not so large as the colonel,' explained mademoiselle.

'I wonder why he does not call,' said Denise presently, looking down into the valley, as if she could perhaps see the explanation there.

'It has something to do with the social geography of the district,' said mademoiselle, 'which we do not understand. The Cheap Funeral alone knows it. Half of the country she colours red, the other half black. Theoretically, we hate a number of persons who reciprocate the feeling heartily. Practically we do not know of their existence. I imagine the Count de Vasselot hates us on the same principle.'

'But we are not going to be dictated to by a number of ignorant peasants,' cried Denise angrily.

'I rather fancy we are.'

Denise was standing by the low wall, with her head thrown back. She was naturally energetic, and had the carriage that usually goes with that quality.

'Are you sure he is there?' she asked, still looking down at the château.

'No, I am not. I have only Maria's word for it.'

'Then I am going to the village of Olmeta to find out,' said Denise.

And mademoiselle followed her to the house without comment. Indeed, she seemed willing enough to do that which they had been warned not to do.

On the road that skirts the hill and turns amid groves of chestnut-trees, they met two men, loitering along with no business in hand, who scowled at them and made no salutation.

'They may scowl beneath their great hats,' said Denise; 'I am not afraid of them.' And she walked on with her chin well up.

Below them, on the left, the terraces of vine and olive were weed-grown and neglected; for Denise had found no one to work on her land, and the soil here is damp and warm, favouring a rapid growth.

Colonel Gilbert had been unable to help them in this matter. His official position necessarily prevented his taking an active part in any local differences. There were Luccans, he said, to be hired at Bastia, hard-working men and skilled vine-dressers, but they would not come to a commune where such active hostility existed, and to induce them to do so would inevitably lead to bloodshed.

The Abbé Susini had called, and told a similar tale in more guarded language. Finding the ladies good Catholics, he pleaded for and abused his poor in one breath, and then returned half the money that Denise gave him.

'As likely as not you will be given credit for the whole in heaven, mademoiselle, but I will only take part of it,' he said.

'A masterful man,' commented Mademoiselle Brun, when he was gone.

But the abbé had suggested no solution to Denise's difficulties. The estate seemed to be drifting naturally into the hands of the only man who wanted it, and, after all, had offered a good price for it.

'I will find out from the Abbé Susini or the mayor whether the Count de Vasselot is really here,' Denise said, as they approached the village. 'And if he is, we will go and see him. We cannot go on like this. He says do not sell, and then he does not come near us. He must give his reasons. Why should I take his advice?'

'Why, indeed?' said Mademoiselle Brun, to whom the question was not quite a new one.



She knew that, though Denise would rebel against de Vasselot's advice, she would continue to follow it.

'It seems to be luncheon-time,' said Denise, when they reached the village. 'The place is deserted. It must be their *déjeuner*.'

'It may be,' responded mademoiselle, with her man-like curttness of speech.

They went into the church, which was empty, and stayed but a few minutes there, for Mademoiselle Brun was as short in her speech with God as with men. When they came out to the market-place, that also was deserted, which was singular, because the villagers in Corsica spend nearly the whole day on the market-place, talking politics and whispering a hundred intrigues of parochial policy; for here a municipal councillor is a great man, and usually a great scoundrel, selling his favour and his vote, trafficking for power, and misappropriating the public funds. Not only was the market-place empty, but some of the house-doors were closed. The door of a small shop was even shut from within as they approached, and surreptitiously barred. Mademoiselle Brun noticed it, and Denise did not pretend to ignore it.

'One would say that we had an infectious complaint,' she said, with a short laugh.

They went to the house of the Abbé Susini. Even this door was shut.

'The abbé is out,' said the old woman who came in answer to their summons, and she closed the door again with more speed than politeness.

Denise did not need to ask which was the mayor's house, for a board, with the word 'Mairie' painted upon it (appropriately enough a movable board), was affixed to a house nearly opposite to the church. As they walked towards it, a stone, thrown from the far corner of the Place, under the trees, narrowly missed Denise, and rolled at her feet. Mademoiselle Brun walked on, but Denise swung round on her heel. There was no one to be seen, so she had to follow Mademoiselle Brun, after all, in silence. She was rather pale, but it was anger that lighted her eyes, and not fear.

Almost immediately a volley of stones followed, and a laugh rang out from beneath the trees. And, strange to say, it was the laugh that at last frightened Denise, and not the stones; for it was a cruel laugh—the laugh of a brutal fool, such as one may

still hear in a few European countries when boys are torturing dumb animals.

'Let us hurry,' said Denise hastily. 'Let us get to the Mairie.'

'Where we shall find the biggest scoundrel of them all, no doubt,' added mademoiselle, who was alert and cool.

But before they reached the Mairie the stones had ceased, and they both turned at the sound of a horse's feet. It was Colonel Gilbert riding hastily into the Place. He saw the stones lying there and the two women standing alone in the sunlight. He looked towards the trees, and then round at the closed houses. With a shrug of the shoulders, he rode towards Denise and dismounted.

'Mademoiselle,' he said, 'they have been frightening you.'

'Yes,' she answered. 'They are not men, but brutes.'

The colonel, who was always gentle in manner, made a deprecatory gesture with the great riding-whip that he invariably carried.

'You must remember,' he said, 'that they are but half civilised. You know their history—they have been conquered by all the greedy nations in succession, and they have never known peace from the time that history began until a hundred years ago. They are barbarians, mademoiselle, and barbarians always distrust a new-comer.'

'But why do they hate me?'

'Because they do not know you, mademoiselle,' replied the colonel, with perhaps a second meaning in his blue eyes.

And, after a pause, he explained further.

'Because they do not understand you. They belong to one of the strongest clans in Corsica, and it is the ambition of every one to belong to a strong clan. But the Peruccas are in danger of falling into dissension and disorder, for they have no head. You are the head, mademoiselle. And the work they expect of you is not work for such hands as yours.'

And again Colonel Gilbert looked at Denise slowly and thoughtfully. She did not perceive the glance, for she was standing with her head half turned towards the trees.

'Ah!' he said, noting the direction of her glance, 'they will throw no more stones, mademoiselle. You need have no anxiety. They fear a uniform as much as they hate it.'

'And if you had not come at that moment?'

'Ah!' said the colonel gravely; and that was all. 'At any rate, I am glad I came,' he added, in a lighter tone, after a pause. 'You were going to the Mairie, mesdemoiselles, when I arrived. Take my advice, and do not go there. Go to the abbé if you like—as a man, not as a priest—and come to me whenever you desire a service, but to no one else in Corsica.'

Denise turned as if she were going to make an exception to this sweeping restriction, but she checked herself and said nothing. And all the while Mademoiselle Brun stood by in silence, a little patient bent woman, with compressed lips, and those steady hazel eyes that see so much and betray so little.

'The abbé is not at home,' continued the colonel. 'I saw him many miles from here not long ago; and although he is quick on his legs—none quicker—he cannot be here yet. If you are going towards the Casa Perucca, you will perhaps allow me to accompany you.'

He led the way as he spoke, leading loosely by the bridle the horse which followed him, and nuzzled thoughtfully at his shoulder. The colonel was, it appeared, one whose gentle ways endeared him to animals.

It was glaringly hot, and when they reached the Casa Perucca, Denise asked the colonel to come in and rest. It was, moreover, luncheon-time, and in a thinly populated country the great distances between neighbours are conducive to an easier hospitality than that which exists in closer quarters. The colonel naturally stayed to luncheon.

He was kind and affable, and had a hundred little scraps of gossip such as exiles love. He made no mention of his offer to buy Perucca, remembered only the fact that he was a gentleman accepting frankly a lady's frank hospitality, and if the conversation turned to local matters, he gracefully guided it elsewhere.

Immediately after luncheon he rose from the table, refusing even to wait for coffee.

'I have my duties,' he explained. 'The War Office is, for reasons known to itself, moving troops, and I have gradually crept up the ladder at Bastia, till I am nearly at the top there.'

Denise went with him to the stable to see that his horse had been cared for.

'They have only left me the decrepit and the half-witted,' she said, 'but I am not beaten yet.'

Colonel Gilbert fetched the horse himself and tightened the

girths. They walked together towards the great gate of solid wood which fitted into the high wall so closely that none could peep through so much as a crack. At the door the colonel lingered, leaning against his great horse and stroking its shoulder thoughtfully with a gloved finger.

'Mademoiselle,' he said at length.

'Yes,' answered Denise, looking at him so honestly in the face that he had to turn away.

'I want to ask you,' he said slowly, 'to marry me.'

Denise looked at him in utter astonishment, her face suddenly red, her eyes half afraid.

'I do not understand you,' she said.

'And yet it is simple enough,' answered the colonel, who himself was embarrassed and ill at ease. 'I ask you to marry me. You think I am too old ——' He paused, seeking his words. 'I am not forty yet, and, at all events, I am not making the mistake usually made by very young men. I do not imagine that I love you—I know it.'

They stood for a minute in silence; then the colonel spoke again.

'Of what are you thinking, mademoiselle?'

'That it is hard to lose the only friend we have in Corsica.'

'You need not do that,' replied the colonel. 'I do not even ask you to answer now.'

'Oh, I can answer at once.'

Colonel Gilbert bit his lip, and looked at the ground in silence.

'Then I am too old?' he said at length.

'I do not know whether it is that or not,' answered Denise; and neither spoke while the colonel mounted and rode slowly away. Denise closed the door quite softly behind him.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### A SUMMONS.

'One stern tyrannic thought that made  
All other thoughts its slave.'

ALL round the Mediterranean Sea there dwell people who understand the art of doing nothing. They do it unblushingly, peaceably, and of a set purpose. Moreover, their forefathers

must have been addicted to a similar philosophy; for there is no Mediterranean town or village without its promenade or lounging-place, where the trees have grown quite large, and the shade is quite deep, and the wooden or stone seats are shiny with use. Here those whom the French call 'worth-nothings' congregate peacefully and happily, to look at the sea and contemplate life from that reflective and calm standpoint which is only to be enjoyed by the man who has nothing to lose. To begin at Valentia, one will find these human weeds almost Oriental in their apathy. Farther north, at Barcelona, they are given to fitful lapses into activity before the heat of the day. At Marseilles they are almost energetic, and are even known to take the trouble of asking the passer for alms. But eastward, beyond Toulon, they understand their business better, and do not even trouble to talk among themselves. The French worth-nothing is, in a word, worth less than any of his brothers—much less than the Italian, who is quite easily roused to a display of temper and a rusty knife—and more nearly approaches the supreme calm of the Moor, who, across the Mediterranean, will sit all day and stare at nothing with any man in the world. And between these dreamy coasts there lie half a dozen islands which, strange to say, are islands of unrest. In Majorca every man works from morn till eve. In Minorca they do the same, and quarrel after nightfall. In Iviza they quarrel all day. In Corsica they do nothing, restlessly; while Sardinia, as all the world knows, is a hotbed of active discontent.

At Ajaccio there are half a dozen idlers on the Place Bonaparte who sit under the trees against the wall; but they never sit there long, and do not know their business. At St. Florent, in the north of the island, which has a western aspect—the best for idling—there are but two real unadulterated knights of industry, who sit on the low wall of that which is called the New Quay, and conscientiously do nothing from morning till night.

'Of course I know him,' one was saying to the other. 'Do I not remember his father, and are not all the de Vasselots cut with the same knife? I tell you there was a moon, and I saw him get off his horse, just here at the very door of Rutali's stable, and unstrap his sack, which he carried himself, and set off towards Olmeta.'

The speaker lapsed into silence, and Colonel Gilbert, who had lunched, and was now sitting at the open window of the little

inn, which has neither sign nor license, leant farther forward. For the word 'Olmeta' never failed to bring a light of energy and enterprise into his quiet eyes.

The inn has its entrance in the main street of St. Florent, and only the back windows look out upon the quay and across the bay. It was at one of these windows that Colonel Gilbert was enjoying a cigarette and a cup of coffee, and the loafers on the quay were unaware of his presence there. And for the sixth time at least the story of Lory de Vasselot's arrival at St. Florent and departure for Olmeta was told and patiently heard. Has not one of the great students of human nature said that the *canaille* of all nations are much alike? And the dull or idle of intellect assuredly resemble each other in the patience with which they will listen to or tell the same story over and over again.

The colonel heard the tale, listlessly gazing across the bay with dreamy eyes, and only gave the talker his full attention when more ancient history was touched upon.

'Yes,' said the idler; 'and I remember his father when he was just at that age—as like this one as one sheep is like another. Nor have I forgotten the story which few remember now.'

He pressed down the tobacco into his wooden pipe—for they are pipe-smokers in a cigarette latitude—and waited cunningly for curiosity to grow. His companion showed no sign, though the colonel set his empty coffee-cup noiselessly aside and leant his elbow on the window-sill.

The speaker jerked his thumb in the direction of Olmeta over his left shoulder far up on the mountain-side.

'That story was buried with Perucca,' he said, after a long pause. 'Perhaps the Abbé Susini knows it. Who can tell what a priest knows? There were two Peruccas once—fine big men—and neither married. The other—Andrei Perucca—who has been in hell these thirty years, made sheep's eyes, they told me, at de Vasselot's young wife. She was French, and willing enough, no doubt. She was dull, down there in that great château; and when a woman is dull she must either go to church or to the devil. She cannot content herself with tobacco or the drink like a man. De Vasselot heard of it. He was a quiet man, and he waited. One day he began to carry a gun, like you and me—a bad example, eh? Then Andrei Perucca was seen to carry a gun also. And, of course, in time they met—up there on the road from Pruneta to Murato. The clouds were down, and the gregale was blowing cold and

showery. It is when the gregale blows that the clouds seem to whisper as they crowd through the narrow places up among the peaks, and there was no other sound while these two men crept round each other among the rocks, like two cats upon a roof. De Vasselot was quicker and smaller, and as agile as a goat, and Andrei Perucca lost him altogether. He was a fool. He went to look for him. As if any one in his senses would go to look for a Corsican in the rocks! That is how the gendarmes get killed. At length Andrei Perucca raised his head over a big stone, and looked right into the muzzle of de Vasselot's gun. 'The next minute there was no head upon Perucca's shoulders.'

The narrator paused, and relighted his pipe with a foul-smelling sulphur match.

'Yes,' he said reflectively; 'they are fine men, the de Vasselots.'

He tapped himself on the chest with the stem of his pipe, and made a gesture towards the mountains and the sky, as if calling upon the gods to hear him.

'I am all for the de Vasselots—I,' he said.

Colonel Gilbert leant out of the window, and quietly took stock of this valuable adherent.

'At that time,' continued the speaker, 'we had at Bastia a young prefect who took himself seriously. He was going to reform the world. They decided to arrest the Count de Vasselot, though they had not a scrap of evidence, and the clan was strong in those days, stronger than the Peruccas are to-day. But they never caught him. They disappeared bag and baggage—went to Paris, I understand; and they say the count died there, or was perhaps killed by the Peruccas, who grew strong under Mattei, so that in a few years it would have been impossible for a de Vasselot to show his face in this country. Then Mattei Perucca died, and was hardly in his grave before this man came. I tell you, I saw him myself, a de Vasselot, with his father's quick way of turning his head, of sitting in the saddle lightly like a Spaniard or a Corsican. That was in the spring, and it is now July—three months ago. And he has never been seen or heard of since. But he is here, I tell you; he is here in the island. As likely as not he is in the old château down there in the valley. No honest man has set his foot across the threshold since the de Vasselots left it thirty years ago—only Jean is there, who has the evil eye. But there are plenty of Perucca's people up at Olmeta who would



risk Jean's eye, and break down the doors of the château at a word from the Casa Perucca. But the girl there who is the head of the clan will not say the word. She does not understand that she is powerful if she would only go to work in the right way, and help her people. Instead of that, she quarrels with them over such small matters as the right of grazing or of cutting wood. She will make the place too hot for her——' He broke off suddenly. 'What is that?' he said, turning on the wall, which was polished smooth by constant friction.

He turned to the north and listened, looking in the direction of Cap Corse, from whence the Bastia road comes winding down the mountain slopes.

'I hear nothing,' said his companion.

'Then you are deaf. It is the diligence half an hour before its time, and the driver of it is shouting as he comes—shouting to the people on the road. It seems that there is news——'

But Colonel Gilbert heard no more, for he had seized his sword, and was already halfway down the stone stairs. It appeared that he expected news, and when the diligence drew up in the narrow street, he was there awaiting it, amid a buzzing crowd, which had inexplicably assembled in the twinkling of an eye. Yes; there was assuredly news, for the diligence came in at a gallop, though there was no one on it but the driver. He shouted incoherently, and waved his whip above his head. Then, quite suddenly, perceiving Colonel Gilbert, he snapped his lips together, threw aside the reins, and leaped to the ground.

'Mon colonel,' he said, 'a word with you.'

And they went apart into a doorway. Three words sufficed to tell all that the diligence driver knew, and a minute later the colonel hurried towards the stable of the inn, where his horse stood ready. He rode away at a sharp trot, not towards Bastia, but down the valley of Vasselot. Although it was evident that he was pressed for time, the colonel did not hurry his horse, but rather relieved it when he could by dismounting, at every sharp ascent, and riding where possible in the deep shade of the chestnut-trees. He turned aside from the main road that climbs laboriously to Oletta and Olmeta, and followed the river-path. In order to gain time he presently left the path, and made a short cut across the open land, glancing up at the Casa Perucca as he did so. For he was trespassing.

He was riding leisurely enough when his horse stumbled, and,

in recovering itself, clumsily kicked a great stone with such force that he shattered it to a hundred pieces, and then stood on three legs, awkwardly swinging his hoof in a way that horses have when the bone has been jarred. In a moment the colonel dismounted, and felt the injured leg carefully.

'My friend,' he said kindly, 'you are a fool. What are you doing? Name of a dog'—he paused, and collecting the pieces of broken quartz, threw them away into the brush—'name of a dog, what are you doing?'

With an odd laugh Colonel Gilbert climbed into the saddle again, and although he looked carefully up at the Casa Perucca, he failed to see Mademoiselle Brun's grey face amid the grey shadows of an olive-tree. The horse limped at first, but presently forgot his grievance against the big stone that had lain in his path. The colonel laughed to himself in a singular way more than once at the seemingly trivial accident, and, on regaining the path, turned in his saddle to look again at the spot where it had occurred.

On nearing the château he urged his horse to a better pace, and reached the great door at a sharp trot. He rang the bell without dismounting, and leisurely quitted the saddle. But the summons was not immediately answered. He jerked at the chain again, and rattled on the door with the handle of his riding-whip. At length the bolts were withdrawn, and the heavy door opened sufficiently to admit a glance of that evil eye which the peasants did not care to face.

Before speaking, the colonel made a step forward, so that his foot must necessarily prevent the closing of the door.

'The Count de Vasselot,' said he.

'Take away your foot,' replied Jean.

The colonel noted with a good-natured surprise the position of his stout riding-boot, and withdrew it.

'The Count de Vasselot,' he repeated. 'You need not trouble, my friend, to tell any lies or to look at me with your evil eye. I know the count is here, for I saw him in Paris just before he came, and I spoke to him at this very door a few weeks ago. He knows me, and I think you know me too, my friend. Tell your master I have news from France. He will see me.'

Jean unceremoniously closed the door, and the colonel, who was moving away towards his horse, turned sharply on his heel when he heard the bolts being surreptitiously pushed back again.

Ah!' he said, and he stood outside the door with his hand

at his moustache, reflectively following Jean's movements, 'they are singularly careful to keep me out, these people.'

He had not long to wait, however, for presently Lory came, stepping quickly over the high threshold and closing the door behind him. But Gilbert was taller than de Vasselot, and could see over his head. He looked right through the house into the little garden on the terrace, and saw some one there who was not Jean. And the light of surprise was still in his eyes as he shook hands with Lory de Vasselot.

'You have news for me?' inquired de Vasselot.

'News for every Frenchman.'

'Ah!'

'Yes. The emperor has declared war against Germany.'

'War!' echoed Lory, with a sudden laugh.

'Yes; and your regiment is the first on the list.'

'I know, I know!' cried de Vasselot, his eyes alight with excitement. 'But this is good news that you tell me. How can I thank you for coming? I must get home—I mean to France—at once. But this is great news!' He seized the colonel's hand and shook it. 'Great news, mon colonel—great news!'

'Good news for you, for you are going. But I shall be left behind as usual. Yes; it is good news for you.'

'And for France,' cried Lory, with both hands outspread, as if to indicate the glory that was awaiting them.

'For France,' said the colonel gravely, 'it cannot fail to be bad. But we must not think of that now.'

'We shall never think of it,' answered Lory. 'This is Monday; there is a boat for Marseilles to-night. I leave Bastia to-night, colonel.'

'And I must get back there,' said the colonel, holding out his hand.

He rode thoughtfully back by the shortest route through the Lancone Defile, and, as he approached Bastia, from the heights behind the town he saw the steamer that would convey Lory to France coming northward from Bonifacio.

'Yes,' he said; 'he will leave Bastia to-night; and assuredly the good God, or the devil, helps me at every turn of this affair.'

*(To be continued.)*

